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February 1983 £1.30

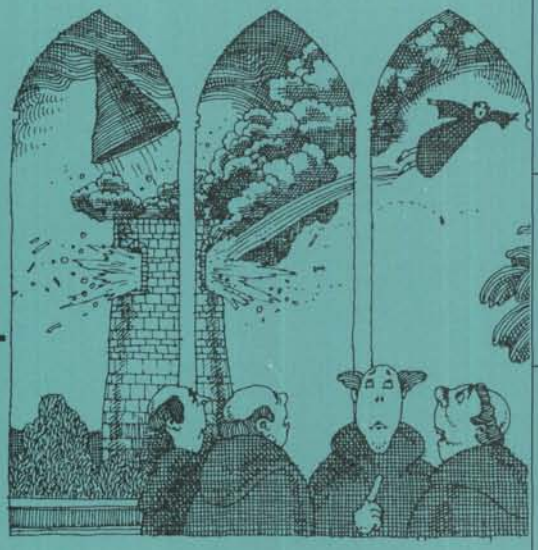
The End of Theology?

George Urban

in a long conversation with

Daniel Bell

The No-Man's-Land *between* Ideology & Religion



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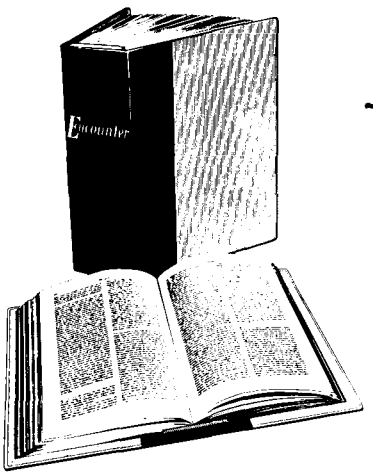

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John McGahern

Parachutes

"I WANT to ask you one very small last favour."

"What is it?"

"Will you stay behind for just five minutes after I leave?"

It was the offer of the blindfold, to accept the darkness for a few moments before it finally fell.

"If we leave together we'll just start to argue again and it's no use. You know it's over. It's been over for a long time now. Will you please stay five minutes?" She put her gloved hand on my arm as she rose. "Just this last time."

She turned and walked away. I was powerless to follow. She did not once look back. The door swung in the emptiness after she had gone. I saw the barman looking at me strangely but I did not care. The long hand of the clock stood at two minutes to eight. It did not seem to move at all. She was gone, slipping further out of reach with every leaden second, and I was powerless to follow.

"A small Jameson. With water", I said to the barman. As I sipped the whiskey, the whole absurdity of my situation came with a rush of anger. It was over. She was gone. Nothing said or done would matter any more, and yet I was sitting like a fool because she'd simply asked me to. Without glancing at the clock, I rose and headed towards the door. Outside she was nowhere in sight.

I could see down on the city, its maze of roads already lighted in the still, white evening, each single road leading in hundreds of directions. I started to run, but then had to stop, realising I didn't know where to run. If there were an instrument like radar . . . but that might show her half-stripped in some car . . . her pale shoulders gleaming as she slipped out of her clothes in a room in Rathmines. . . .

I stared at the street. Cars ran. Buses stopped. Lights changed. Shop windows stayed where they were. People answered to their names. All the days from now on would have to begin without her. The one thing I couldn't bear was to face back to the room, the room that had seen such a tenuous happiness.

I went into the Stag's Head and then O'Neills. Both bars were crowded. There was no one there that I knew. I passed slowly through without trying to order anything. The barmen were too busy to call out. I moved to the bars off Grafton Street, and at the third bar I saw the Mulveys before I heard my name called. It was Claire Mulvey who had called my name. Paddy Mulvey was reading a book, his eyes constantly flickering from the page to the door, but as soon as he heard my name called his eyes returned fixedly to the page. They were sitting between the pillars at the back. Eamonn Kelly appeared to be sitting with them.

"We thought you were avoiding us", Claire Mulvey said as we shook hands. Her strained, nervous features still showed frayed remnants of beauty. "We haven't seen you for months."

"For God's sake, isn't it a free country?" Paddy Mulvey said brightly. "Hasn't the man a right to do his own thing in his own way?"

"Blackguard", Eamonn Kelly said gravely, his beautiful, pale face relaxing in a wintry smile.

"Why are you not drinking?" Empty half glasses stood in front of them on the table.

"I'm afraid we're suffering from that old perplexity", Mulvey said. "And we've been waiting for Halloran. He was supposed to be here more than an hour ago. He owes us a cheque. He even left us a hostage for reassurance." He pointed to a brown leather suitcase upright against the pillar.

"I'll get the drinks", I offered.

"Halloran went off with a boy. I've been telling them he'll not be back", Eamonn Kelly volunteered.

I got four pints and four whiskeys from the bar.

"I should thank you for this", Eamonn Kelly

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said as he lifted his whiskey. "But after careful consideration have come down against it."

"Why?"

"Because I've decided you're a blackguard."

"Why me?"

"Because one must have some fixed principles. I've decided you are a blackguard. That's an end of it. There is no appeal."

"Oh, for God's sake", Mulvey said. "You're not drunk enough for that yet. Here's health."

"Good luck", Claire Mulvey said.

"What are you reading?"

"Another slim volume. I'm writing it up for Halloran", and he started to speak of the book in a tone of spirited mockery.

I tried to listen but found the arid, mocking words unbearable. Nothing lived. Then I found myself turning towards a worse torture, to all I wanted not to think about.

She had asked me to a dinner in her sister's house a few days before Christmas. We'd met inside a crowded G.P.O. She was wearing a pale raincoat with the detachable fur collar she wore with so many coats. Outside in O'Connell Street the wind was cold, spitting rain, and we'd stood in a doorway as we waited for a bus to take us to the house in the suburbs.

The house her sister lived in was a small semi-detached in a new estate: a double gate, a garage, a piece of lawn hemmed in with concrete, a light above the door. The rooms were small, carpeted. A coal fire burned in the tiled fireplace of the front room.

Her sister was as tall as she, blackhaired, and beautiful, pregnant with her first child. Her husband was small, energetic, and taught maths in a nearby school.

The bottles of wine we'd brought were handed over. Glasses of whiskey were poured. We touched the glasses in front of the coal fire. They'd gone to a great deal of trouble with the meal. There were small roast potatoes, peas, breadcrumb stuffing with the roast turkey. Brandy was poured over the plum pudding and lit. Some vague unease curdled the food and cheer in that small front room, was sharpened by the determined gaiety. It was as if one were looking down a long institutional corridor; the child in the feeding chair could be seen already, the next child, and the next, the postman, the milkman, the van with fresh eggs and vegetables from the country, the tired clasp over the back of the hand to show tenderness as real as the lump in the throat, the lawnmowers in summer, the thickening wastes. It hardly seemed necessary to live it.

"What did you think of them?" she'd asked as she took my arm in the road outside.

"I thought they were very nice. They went to a great deal of trouble."

"What did you think of the house?"

"It's not my kind of house. It's the sort of house that would drive me crackers."

"What sort of house would you like?"

"Something bigger than that. Something with a bit more space. An older house. Nearer the city."

"Excuse me", she said with pointed sarcasm as she withdrew her arm.

I should have said, "It's a lovely house. Any house with you would be a lovely house", and caught and kissed her in the wind and rain. And it was true. Any house with her would have been a lovely house. I had been the fool to think that I could stand outside life. I would agree to anything now. I would not even ask for love. If she stayed, love might come in its own time, I reasoned blindly.

"DO YOU REALISE how rich the English language is, that it should have two words, for instance, such as *comprehension* and *apprehension*, so subtly different in shading and yet so subtly alike? Has anything of that ever occurred to you?" This was Mulvey now.

"No, I hadn't realised."

"Of course you wouldn't. And I'd rather comprehend another drink."

"Comprehension. Apprehension", Eamonn Kelly had started to say as I went to get the drinks. "I'll apprehend you for a story. An extraordinarily obscene story."

"Jesus", Mulvey groaned.

"I hope it's not long", Claire Mulvey said. "Where have you been all this time?" she asked as he began. "We don't have to listen to that. Those stories are all the same."

"I got mixed up with a girl."

"Why didn't you bring her here? You should at least have given us the chance to look her over."

"She wouldn't like it here. Anyhow it's over now."

"I'm glad you're here", she said.

"Is he?" Eamonn Kelly shouted, annoyed that we hadn't listened to the story he'd been telling.

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"Is he what?" Mulvey asked.

"Is he here? Am I here?"

"Unfortunately you're here", Mulvey replied.

"Hypocrites. Liars."

"Lies are the oil of the social machinery."

"Don't mind him", Mulvey said.

"Lies", he ignored. "She ate green plums. She was pregnant. That's why she's not here. Blackguard."

"This is terrible", Mulvey said.

The anxiety as to where she was at this moment struck without warning. "Did you ever wish for some device like radar that could track a person down at any given moment, light up where they were, like on a screen?" I turned to Mulvey.

"That would be a nightmare." Mulvey surprisingly rallied to the question, his interest caught. "I was never very worried about what other people were up to. My concern has always been that they might discover what *I* was up to."

"Then you've never loved", Eamonn Kelly said grandly. "I know what he's talking about. There were times I too wished for radar."

"I wouldn't mind putting radar on Halloran just now. To get him to give me that cheque. To give him back his damned suitcase. We've ferried the thing around for two whole days now", Mulvey turned aside to complain.

"You must have wanted to know sometimes what I was doing", Claire Mulvey said.

"Never."

"Even if that is true, I don't think you should say it."

"That's precisely why it should be said. Because it is true. Why else should anything be said?"

They started to quarrel. I bought a last round. It was getting close to closing time. Eamonn Kelly had begun an energetic conversation with himself, accompanied by equally vigorous gestures, a dumbshow of removing hat and gloves, handshakes, movements forward and back, a great muttering of some complicated sentence, replacing of hat and gloves. The Mulveys had retreated into stewing silences. I was bewildered as to what I was doing here but was even blinder still about possible alternatives. A whole world had been cut from under me.

"Do you have enough for a sugar bag?" Mulvey suddenly asked. "We could go back to my place."

"I have plenty."

"I'll make it up to you as soon as I see Halloran."

THE SUGAR BAGS were strong grey paper bags used to take bottles of stout out. They usually held a dozen. I bought three. Eamonn Kelly assumed he was going back to Mulvey's with us, for he offered to carry one of the bags. Claire Mulvey carried Halloran's suitcase. There were many drunks on the street. One made a playful pass at the sugar bag Mulvey carried, and got berated, the abuse too elevated and fluent to get us into trouble. We could not have looked too sober ourselves, for I noticed a pair of guards stand to watch our progress with the case and sugar bags. Mulvey's house was in a terrace along the canal. A young moon lay in a little water between the weeds and cans and bottles.

"The wan moon is setting on the still wave", Eamonn Kelly took up from the reflection as he swayed along with a sugar bag.

"Burns", Mulvey said savagely. "And there's not a wave in sight. What do you think of old Burns?" he said as he put the key in the door. A red-eyed child in a nightdress met us. She was hungry. Claire Mulvey soothed her, started to get her some food from the cold press, and we took the sugar bags upstairs. There was no furniture of any kind in the room other than empty orange crates. There were plenty of books on the floor along the walls. The room was chill, and Mulvey stamped on some of the orange crates until they were broken enough to fit into the grate. He lit them with newspaper and they quickly caught.

Eamonn Kelly was busy opening the bottles with a silver penknife. When Claire Mulvey joined us he had opened all the bottles in one of the sugar bags. The orange boxes had all burned down, taking the chill from the room, leaving delicate traceries of blackened wire in the grate.

"She's gone to sleep again. There was some milk and cereal", Claire Mulvey said.

We drank steadily. Eamonn Kelly opened more bottles. Mulvey lectured Kelly. Then he lectured me. The toilet in the corridor didn't work. I fought sleep.

The room was full of early light when I awoke. I'd been placed on a mattress and given a pillow and rug. There was nobody else in the

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room. The books were scattered all along the walls. Empty bottles were everywhere, the room filled with the sour-sweet odour of decaying stout. The shapes of blackened wire stood in the empty grate.

It was the first morning without her, and I could hardly believe I'd slept. I got up, picked my way between the bottles to the outside toilet that didn't work, ran the water in the sink, picked my way back to the mattress. The palest of crescent moons still lay on the dirty water of the canal.

Church bells started to beat the air. It was Sunday—seven o'clock. I got up and let myself out of the house. Everywhere people were going to Mass. I drifted with them as far as the church door, turning back into the empty streets once Mass had started, walking fast until I came to a quiet side street where I sat on the steps of one of the houses. There were five steps up to each house. The stone was granite. Many of the iron railings were painted blue. Across the street was a dishevelled lilac bush. They'd taught us to notice such things when young. They said it was the world. A lilac bush, railings, three milk bottles with silver caps, granite steps.... I had to rise and walk to beat back a rush of anger. I'd have to learn the world all over again.

THE MULVEYS were sitting round the table in the kitchen when I got back. the child was eating cereal, the parents drinking tea from mugs.

"I'm sorry I passed out last night."

"It's all right. You were tired", Mulvey smiled—often he could be charming in the morning.

"Did Kelly go home?"

"He always goes home no matter how drunk he is."

I handed round newspapers I'd bought on the way back and was given tea. The child inspected me gravely from behind her spoon.

"Can you lend me a fiver?" Mulvey asked me about midday. "I'll give it back to you as soon as I find Halloran."

"You don't have to worry about that." It was a sort of freedom to be rid of the money.

"There's no reason I should be spending all your money. I'll give it back to you this evening. We're bound to unearth Halloran this evening", and it more or less arranged the rest of the day. We had drinks at a tiny local along the canal, the child lemonade and crisps.

Stew was heated when we got back to the house. Then Mulvey shut himself upstairs to write a review. Claire Mulvey watched an old movie with Cary Grant on the black-and-white television. I played draughts with the child. It was four when Mulvey came down.

"How did it go?" I asked without looking up from the pieces on the board.

"It didn't go at all. I couldn't get started with thinking of that damned Halloran. He's ruined the day as well." He was plainly in foul humour.

We left the child to play with neighbours and set out towards Grafton Street to look for Halloran, Mulvey carrying the suitcase. He had been at his most affable and bluff-charming while handing over the child to the neighbours, but as soon as we were alone he started to seethe with resentment.

"It's an affront to expect someone to lug this thing round for two whole days."

"What harm is it?" his wife made the mistake of saying. "He's not a very happy person."

"What do you know about his happiness or unhappiness?"

"He sweats a kind of unhappiness. He's bald and huge and not much more than thirty."

"I never heard such rubbish. He's probably in some good hotel down in Wicklow at this very moment, relaxing with a gin and tonic, watching the sun set from a deckchair, regaling this boy with poetry or love or some other obscenity. I'm not carrying the fat ponce's suitcase a yard farther", and he flung it from him, the suitcase sliding to a violent stop against the ledge of the area railing without breaking open.

"I'll carry it." His wife went and picked up the case, but Mulvey was already striding ahead.

"When we were first together I used to hate these rows. I used to be ill afterwards, but Paddy taught me that there was nothing bad about them. He taught me that fights shouldn't be taken too seriously. They often clear the air. They're just another form of expression", she confided.

"I hate rowing."

"I used to feel that way."

THIS, I THOUGHT, was a true waste. If she was with me now we could be by the sea.

But we'd gone to the sea four Sundays before, to Dollymount. She'd been silent and

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withdrawn all that day. I was afraid to challenge her mood, too anxious just to have her near, to follow her anywhere. She said we'd go over to the sandhills on the edge of the links, away from the Wall and the crowded beach. She seemed to be searching for a particular place among the sandhills, and when she found it smiled that familiar roguish smile I hadn't seen for months, and took a photo from her handbag.

"Willie Moran took that in this very spot", she said. "Do you recognise it at all?"

Willie Moran was a young solicitor she'd gone out with. She'd wanted to marry him. It had ended a few months before we met. After it ended she hadn't been able to live alone and had gone back to an older sister's house.

I used to be jealous of Willie Moran but by now even that had been burned away. I just thought him a fool for not marrying her, wished that I'd been he. I handed her back the photo. "You look beautiful in it."

"You see, it was afterwards it was taken. I'm well tousled." She laughed and drew me down. She wanted to make love there. There seemed to be no one passing. We covered ourselves with a white raincoat.

Her mood changed as quickly again as soon as we rose. She wanted to end the day, to separate.

"We could go to one of the cinemas in O'Connell Street or to eat somewhere." I would offer anything to keep her near.

"No. Not this evening. I just want to have an early night. I've a kind of headache."

It was then she pointed out that she'd lost an earring in the sandhills, one of a pair of silver pendants I'd given her for her birthday.

As soon as she left me I retracked my way back into the sandhills. Our shapes were still where we had lain in the loose sand. With a pocket comb I came on the pendant where the sand and long white grass met. I was very happy, only too anxious to believe that it augured well, that it was a sign that the whole course of the affair had turned towards an impossible happiness. "We will be happy. We'll be happy. It will turn out all right now." It was a pure dream of paradise.

But all the finding of the pendant had done was to hold off this hell for four whole weeks. It was strange to think that only for coming on the simple earring in the sand this day, this unendurable day, would have fallen four weeks ago. She had said so.

THE HARCOURT STREET LIGHTS had brought Mulvey's enraged stride to a stop. He turned and came back towards us. "If I can't carry it, it's an even worse form of humiliation to have to watch my wife carry it. Throw it there", and when she protested he took it from her and threw it down.

"I'll carry it", I said. It was so light it could be empty, but when I swung it I felt things move within the leather.

"What business of yours is it?" he demanded.

"None. But I don't want to leave it behind on the street."

"You take it too seriously." He brightened. "It wouldn't be left behind."

"I don't mind carrying it at all", I said.

"Do you know what colour of sky that is?" He pointed above the roofs of Harcourt Street.

"It's blue", I said. "A blue sky."

"It's not a blue sky, but it goes without saying that blue is what it would be called by everybody in this sloppy country. *Agate* is the exact word. There are many blues. That is an agate sky."

"How do you know it's agate?"

"A painter I used to knock around with taught me the different colours."

"It's a beautiful word", I said.

"It's the *right* word", he replied.

"I've just noticed what a lovely evening it is", Claire Mulvey said wistfully. "There's just the faintest hint of autumn."

"The last time we met I seem to remember you saying that Halloran was all right", I said. "You said he was a sensitive person."

"Oh, I was just making him up", Mulvey laughed, breaking as quickly into jocular good humour as he had into anger. "You don't have to take what I say about people so solemnly. I am always making people up. People need a great deal of making up. I don't see how they'd be tolerable otherwise. Everybody does it. You'll learn that soon enough. The thing is to come to look on it casually."

The light seemed to glow in a gentle fullness on the bullet-scarred stone of the College of Surgeons. Stephen's Green looked full of peace within its green railings. There was a smoky blue in the air that warned of the autumn. Claire Mulvey had been silent for several minutes. Her face was beautiful in its tiredness, and it was plainly elsewhere.

"We have to be thankful for this good weather while it lasts", she said when we reached the bar. "It's lovely to see the doors of

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the bars open so late in the summer."

Halloran was not in the bar. We counted out the money and found we'd enough for one round but not for a second. Mulvey bought the drinks and took them to a table near the door. We could see the whole way across the street to the closed shoeshop.

"Where's that case?" Mulvey said in an exasperation of waiting. "We've been lugging it around for so long we might as well see what we've been lugging around."

"What does it matter? He left it with us", Claire Mulvey pleaded. "And he may come at any minute."

The opposition seemed to drive Mulvey on. When the lock held, he lifted the suitcase to his knees, and holding it just below the level of the table took a nailfile from his pocket.

"Don't open it", his wife pleaded. "He left it locked. It's like opening someone's letters."

Suddenly the lock sprung beneath the probing of the small file, and he opened it slowly, keeping one eye on the door. An assortment of women's underclothes lay in the bottom of the case, all black, a slip, a brassière, panties, long nylon stockings, a pair of red shoes, and beneath, a small Roman Missal, its ribbons of white and green and yellow and red hanging from the edges. *In Latin and English for every day in the year.*

I thought he'd make a joke of it, call to have a bucket of water in readiness when Halloran appeared with the boy. "This is just too much", he said, and closed the suitcase, probing again with the nailfile till the catch locked.

"It wasn't right to open it", Claire Mulvey said.

"Of course it was right. Now we know what we're really dealing with. Plain, dull, unimaginative perversity. Imagine that ponce dressing himself up in the gear. It's too much."

"It mightn't be his", she protested.

"Of course it's his. Whose else could it be!"

Eamonn Kelly came in. He'd met Halloran and the boy in Baggott Street that morning after Mass. He said that he'd be here at six and had given him money to buy us drinks till he came. We all asked for pints. I went to help Eamonn Kelly bring the drinks from the counter.

"Did you get home all right last night?" I asked as we waited on the pulling of the pints.

"Would I be here if I hadn't?" he retorted. I didn't answer. I brought the drinks back to the table.

"Well, at least this is a move in the right direction", Mulvey said as he raised his glass to his lips. I felt leaden with tiredness, the actual bar close to the enamelled memories of the morning. Everything around me looked like that dishevelled lilac bush, those milk bottles, granite steps. . . .

THE STATE WAS SO CLOSE to dreaming that I stared in disbelief when I saw the first thistledown, its thin, pale parachute drifting so slowly across the open doorway that it seemed to move more in water than in air. A second came soon after the first had crossed out of sight, moving in the same unhurried way. A third. A fourth. There were three of the delicate parachutes moving together at the same dream-like pace across the doorway.

"Do you see the thistles", I said. "It's strange to see them in the middle of Grafton Street."

"There are backyards and dumps around Grafton Street too. You only see the fronts", Mulvey said. "Yes. There's plenty of dumps."

Several more arrived and passed on in the same slow dream. There was always one or several in the doorway. When at last there were none it seemed strange, but then one would appear when they seemed quite stopped, move slowly across, but the intervals between were lengthening.

"They seem to be coming from the direction of Duke Street", Claire Mulvey said. "There are no gardens or dumps that I can think of there."

"You think that because you can't see any. There are dumps and yards and gardens, and everything bloody people do, but they're at the back."

"They may have come from even farther away", I said. "I wonder how far they can travel."

"It'd be easy to look it up", Mulvey said. "That's what books are for."

"They can't come on many easy seed-beds in the environs of Grafton Street."

"There's a dump near Mercer's. And there's another in Castle Street." Mulvey started to laugh at some private joke. "And nature will have provided her usual hundredfold overkill. For the hundred that fall on stone or pavement one will find its dump and grow up into a proud thistle and produce thousands of fresh new thistledowns."

"Hazlitt", Eamonn Kelly ventured.

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"Hazlitt's far too refined", Mulvey said. "Just old boring rural Ireland strikes again. Even its principal city has one foot in a manure heap." The discussion had put Mulvey in extraordinary good humour.

Halloran and the boy appeared. Halloran was larger than I remembered, bald, wearing a dishevelled pinstripe suit, sweating profusely. He started to explain something in a very agitated manner even before he got to our table. The boy followed behind like a small dog, his black hair cropped very close to his skull, quiet and looking around, seemingly unafraid: and as he came towards the table, a single thistledown appeared, and seemed to hang for a still moment beyond his shoulder in the doorway. A hand reached out, the small fresh hand of a girl or boy, but before it had time to close, the last pale parachute moved on out of sight as if breathed on by the hand's own movement.

Lightly as they, we must have drifted to the dancehall a summer ago. The late daylight had shone through the glass dome above the dancefloor, strong as the light of the ballroom, the red-and-blue lights that started to sweep the floor as soon as the waltz began.

She'd been standing with a large blonde girl on the edge of the dancefloor. I could not take my eyes from her black hair, the pale curve of her throat. A man crossed to the pair of girls: it was the blonde girl he asked to dance

I followed him across the ballroom, and as soon as I touched her elbow she turned and came with me on to the floor.

"Do you like waltzes?" were the first words she spoke as we began to dance.

She did not speak again. As we kept turning to the music we moved through the circle where the glass dome was still letting in daylight, and kept on after we'd passed the last of the pillars hung with the wire baskets of flowers, out beyond the draped curtains, until we seemed to be turning in nothing but air beneath the sky, a sky that was neither agate nor blue, just the anonymous sky of any and every day above our lives as we set out.

Heloise

We all know who Heloise was and Abelard
But this Heloise was not of that ilk,
Being a waitress in a lorry-driver's caff.
She was far-off and plain so she got none
Of the nips and arm-stroking the pretty
Girls got although they told her to use
Eye-liner and lipstick and get-going.
Also she was for ever paying out earnings
For crockery she dropped being thoughtless.

Then one day an old man who thought he was
Eighteen not eighty chatted her up and asked
Her out, and she went and he told her about
ART until she was hooked, forgot about hot
Dogs, mash, and beans on toast and gladly gave
Him a good-night kiss, the height of his bliss
After gallery gazing or listening to him
Relate Wordsworth at his worst, and finally
Ended up writing novels the editors snatched

Up begging for more. Forgot the old man,
Now lives in Hampstead and is known indubitably
As a writer of Literature, cultivates being
Plainer than plain being a celebrity now.

Madge Hales

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George Urban

A Conversation with Daniel Bell

On Religion & Ideology

1. The Authentic Self of the 1960s

URBAN: *In your book, "The End of Ideology" (1960), you make a surprising statement. The age of ideologies, you say, has run its course—there is an exhaustion of political ideas: "The ladder to the City of Heaven can no longer be a 'faith-ladder' but an empirical one. . . ."*

The 1960s were, on the face of it, unkind to your analysis, for what we saw, especially in the second half of the 1960s, was the sudden mushrooming appearance of ideologies equipped with faith-ladders (even escalators), most of them claiming to derive their legitimacy from Marx and Lenin. If the 1950s showed exhaustion, the late 1960s showed the ideological temper to be in full flood again.

Sixteen years after the appearance of "The End of Ideology" you published "The Cultural Contradictions of Capitalism." In it you call for a "public philosophy" and, more interestingly, "some conception of religion", because (as you say) "the real problem of modernity is the problem of belief . . . it is a spiritual crisis." It would, then, appear to me that the "faith-ladder", which you saw as irrelevant and even damaging in the late 1950s, became in some ways desirable in the mid-1970s.

*How did **this** come out of **that**? I may, of course, have done you an injustice by talking of ideology and religion as though the two were interchangeable—*

BELL: The question does, indeed, begin with a misunderstanding—not necessarily yours: the title of *The End of Ideology* has hung like an albatross round my neck. It is too abrupt. But if you look at the last chapter, which deals with the exhaustion of critical ideas in the West in the 1950s, you will find that I am saying two things. First, that the old ideologies are exhausted, but also that there is always a hunger among intellectuals for *an* ideology. (I was, you must remember, speaking against the background of British cultural rebellion in the 1950s as represented by Kingsley Amis, John Wain and John Osborne).[1] Having said that, I proceeded to observe that, in one way or another, ideologies would reappear, and that I could foresee the particular features of new ideologies waiting in the wings to assert themselves. These, I said, would be Third World ideologies: colour, race, new nationalisms, Pan-Africanism, Pan-Arabism would be their principal components. The difference between these and the older ideologies, I went on to explain, was that the 19th-century Western ideologies were universalistic, humanistic, and moral, whereas the new ones would be instrumental, parochial, and raucous.

Looking at the resurgence of Marxist ideology in the 1960s, two things strike me as being significant. One is that there were no genuinely new intellectual issues posed—none that had not been discussed *ad nauseam* by Left-wing groups (Trotskyites, Mensheviks, Social Democrats, and others) in the 1930s, 1940s and 1950s. Max Schachtman had dealt with bureaucratic collectivism, Rudolf Hilferding with totalitarian imperialism, Sidney Hook with the major philosophical issues, and so on. Secondly, the resurrection of Marxism was accompanied by a striking sense of guilt and an identification with the Third World. In the US, this was particularly visible in the case of the so-called Weathermen who talked about "white-skin privilege" and were urging white society to cast off these "privileges."

I have never held the view that people do not need faith. They always need *some* faith. Ideology is a form of mobilised faith and has aspects of religion. As the appeal of the traditional religions is reduced and demolished by attrition so, too, are ideologies affected by attrition. In one sense they tend to be negated more quickly than religion because they tend to get linked to historical individuals—Stalin, Trotsky, Mao—and when the authority of these is undermined by factionalism, splits or whatever, the resulting sense of disillusion feeds back into the ideology itself and undermines it.

[1] Though they were "angry young men" then, they have since, in different ways, become much more conservative (or, should I say, tempered in the case of Wain). Each generation has its own travails.

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But coming back to your larger question, I refer you to Max Weber. He said that he knew of no society that had managed to live without some belief in the nature of a religion. Men will always have a need to explain the fears and perplexities of human existence. The most coherent response to their search has always been religion. Religion derives from our confrontation with nature; and the oldest religions were built around this confrontation, first in animistic and then in monotheistic forms.

—You are saying that your interest, in the 1980s, in the revival of religion, on the one hand, and your earlier interest in the declining fortunes of ideologies, on the other, are all of a piece?

BELL: Yes, my interest in the two is obviously connected. I was, and I am, trying to identify the kind of searches that exist for new belief-systems, that is, for systems which equip people with a sense of the transcendent in their lives, whether this sense of transcendence is centred in politics or whether it takes religious forms in a more general sense. That is the link in my thinking between the 1960s and 1980s.

BEFORE WE PROCEED *to examine your proposition that a new sense of religion is about to emerge in Western society, let me ask you: In what sense would you consider the ideological rebellions of the late 1960s and early 1970s to have been expressions of "religion", or at least of religiosity?*

We tend to forget that some of the precursors of Marxist socialism, especially in France, saw socialism as a form of religion, and indeed Saint-Simon called it "Le Nouveau Christianisme" (to quote the title of his famous book). One of the Saint-Simonians, Enfantin, was a mystic; another, the feminist-socialist Barrault, undertook a journey to the East to locate a "Mère Suprême" who would redeem mankind. We know of

> **"the bizarre episode at Christmas 1829 when Olinde Rodrigues, amidst scenes of religious enthusiasm, consecrated Enfantin and Bazard as the two *Pères Suprêmes* of the new Church. . . . At some of the early apostolic sessions the disciples saw visions of Christ, suffered hysterical seizures, or found themselves suddenly possessed of the gift of tongues."**

(One should, perhaps, not make too much of the vocabulary of these early socialists. After all, the pioneers of the Renaissance and Reformation, too, expressed their ideas in the imagery of Medieval Christianity, for there was no other.)

My question, then is twofold: Was the revival of ideology in the late 1960s a religious type of phenomenon and, secondly, were the various cultic (Christian and other) elements in it mere parasites on the political core of the ideology, or were they in some ways essential parts of it?

BELL: An explanation of a *particular* event is always largely idiosyncratic since one has to account for the time and place of the eruption of that event. The more general focus, which is political and cultural, derives from the historical contexts: in this instance, the fact that the culture and politics of the time have been primarily liberal and Left. And finally, there is the element of affect and symbolism, the language and forms in which the feelings are expressed.

The language and symbolism, *au fond*, have a religious cast in that what drives them is a hunger for transcendental purpose. The politics and culture were "Left" because it was anti-institutional, for that has been the basic context of cultural expression in Western society in this century, if not before. But those are general factors and do not explain the particularities of time and place. For that one has to get closer to the terrain.

The first element in any explanation of why so many young people were suddenly seized by an ideologically coloured rebellion is demographic: a quantitative threshold was being crossed. In the 1940s and 1950s there had been no increase in the number of young people as a proportion of the population as a whole, but between 1960 and 1968 the proportion dramatically jumped (by about 50%); and with it came a new consciousness and a new sense of excitement. The second factor stemmed from the arrival of what I called the "post-industrial" phase of society. Whereas previously society reproduced itself through the property system, under the post-industrial dispensation it reproduces itself largely through education, and therefore the educational system became the focal gateway for access to place in society. There was a tidal wave of individuals coming through the institutions of higher education, and these were not prepared to meet it. Great pressures and profound anxieties were generated: Will I get into a good college? . . . can I get into graduate school? . . . will I be able to move ahead quickly? . . .

Now, analogies are perhaps too facile, but they are nevertheless useful in providing a sense of resemblance. What we had here was similar to human behaviour in the early phases of the Industrial Revolution: when a new discipline of work is imposed on people as a harness—on people who came from rustic backgrounds and had to learn to adjust to new ways of working and living—their first reaction was Luddism or machine-breaking.

In the 1960s, this was to some extent paralleled by the young generation who became *organisation-breakers*. They were being hard pressed to fit into the slots of an educational system in order to move ahead, and they rebelled against it. That was

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the time when phrases like *"the rat race"* came into everyday usage. To these were added a whole series of diverse elements, the most important being the emergence of the Black movement in America. It provided a sense of psychological identification with other forces of rebellion centred in the Third World. Finally, of course, we had Viet Nam, with two consequences: (*a*) we had conscription, and hence (*b*) young people in the armed forces serving in a war which they felt had no meaning for them, and which landed them in a profound crisis of conscience. The ideological revival of the 1960s sprang from the fusion of all these elements.

But, to come back to your major question: the New Left of the 1960s was, initially, highly *destructive* of ideology. The young people who attended the so-called Port Huron conference, the "Students for a Democratic Society", proudly announced that they were not going to be subject to the "stilted" formulas of the ideology of the Old Left. Their rebellion was, really, one of gut reactions and anger. More than anything else, they were carried by a *mood*, later to be reinforced by the Viet Nam war and a large element of radical syndicalism. In France this mood was summed up by Cohn-Bendit in phrases like "the imagination seizing power", in America by the Yippies—people like Jerry Rubin and Abbie Hoffman. And it was only later, as the new rebels came up against the problems of organisation and the pressures of the Old Left, that they had to find an analytical framework to explain what they were doing. The most convenient language at hand was, of course, Marxism.

What is most striking here is that their Marxism could not be orthodox Marxism because that had been too discredited. Heretical Marxists were found to serve as symbols: Lukács was suddenly discovered; Brecht became a hero and Gramsci became a model. The young rebels were not much interested in what Lukács, Brecht, and Gramsci were actually saying. Their need was to find totemic symbols in order to legitimate what they were doing. Perhaps the greatest irony of this feverish search for ideological leaders was the elevation of Herbert Marcuse as chief mentor of the student rebellion. Marcuse had written a book—*One Dimensional Man* (1964)—which was being constantly cited by the New Left as the source of their inspiration. But—and here is the bitter irony—Marcuse's entire argument in that book is that a phenomenon like the New Left was impossible in a technological society. Technological rationality, Marcuse reasoned, had so completely triumphed in modern society that there was no room left for revolts of any kind. And yet, here was Marcuse being celebrated as the hero of the New Left on the strength of a book which denied the New Left's very existence!

—But did all this add up to a religious type of phenomenon? Our notion of rebels-with-causes and even home-spun ideologies does not necessarily induce us to associate them with the idea of religion, even though revolutionary nationalists like Mazzini and Mickiewicz, or some of the early socialists I have just mentioned, did fashion their cause into "religion" in the vague sense of the word.

BELL: Did the New Left ideologies (if we can indeed grace them with that name) amount to "religion"? My answer to that has to be largely negative, or, to qualify this a shade more precisely, I would not call these ideologies "religious" in the way in which I should like to restrict the use of the word. They were psychological phenomena in the first place, and a number of books and studies explain the context in which they had arisen. Philip Rieff, for example, in *The Triumph of the Therapeutic* (1973) shows how therapy replaced morality in the culture of the period. Erik Erikson coined the phrase "identity crisis" to convey the idea that young people carried within them a number of discordant personalities which they could not integrate. Lionel Trilling pointed to the need to establish a personal "authenticity", and Sartre spoke of *mauvais foi*, expressing the notion of man's difficulty in being true to himself.

In the 1960s all this questioning came to a head, and large numbers of young people suddenly asked themselves: Well, which *is* the authentic "I"? This started a profound and often painful search for the authentic self within all the discordant roles to which people were (as they thought) being subjected. This was, if you like, a *pre*-religious phenomenon. I would not call it religious, but it was preparing the ground for a religious type of affirmation.

Let me draw your attention to what I believe is a revealing analogy. There is a remarkable book by Arthur Darby Nock, the Harvard historian of religion, called *Conversion*. What he shows very vividly is the rise of Christianity out of a welter of conflicting cults between 200 B.C. and about 100 A.D. Eastern, Egyptian, Syrian cults and others were flooding into the City. The citizens of Rome found themselves subject to different pulls—the cults of Serapis, Ishtar, Isis, Osiris and others—each seeking to offer some notion of redemption and salvation. The Romans were perplexed, their loyalties divided. Christianity triumphed for two main reasons: it had a coherent world-view to offer, and the beginnings of a strong institutional framework to provide continuity.

My conclusion would be: to the extent that a parallel can be said to exist between Hellenistic Rome and our own time, there are periods of syncretism in history when people move in rapid succession from one cult to another in search of a firm and lasting attachment.

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2. *Modernity & Belief*

BUT WHAT IS *the target of your analogy? Am I to understand that the confused,* Marxisant *ideologies of the late 1960s provided between them some firm response to the young generation's search for an identity, i.e. that they run at least vaguely parallel with the triumph of Christianity in the Hellenistic period? Or are you implying that these ideologies were themselves part of a syncretistic search for an institutional religious answer, i.e. a prelude to a genuine religious reorientation of the kind you predict in "The Cultural Contradictions of Capitalism"?*

BELL: The New Left ideologies were, of course, providing no answers at all to the confused search of the 1960s; rather they were themselves part of the problem. But let me take this in a broader context. My analogy is with the nemesis of bourgeois liberal society. The 18th and 19th centuries saw the breakdown of traditional religious authority and produced (in my view) five contending aftereffects. These were: rationalism and scepticism (I remind you of Bertrand Russell's famous essay "A Free Man's Worship"); aestheticism (symbolised in figures like Baudelaire and some aspects of Nietzsche's life); existentialism (both the religious strain as represented in Kierkegaard and the atheistic as represented by Sartre); civil religions (such as nationalism); and political religions such as Marxism. What I would argue is that, for different reasons and in different degrees, all these have failed to provide an adequate response to the evaporation of religious authority, and left our culture in the grip of a frantic syncretism.

Now, what are the basic elements of this syncretism? The heart of liberal bourgeois society, in the best and worst sense, was an emphasis on the *individual* free from the ties of community, free from the ties of birth and the obligations of the past. This expressed itself in a radical *laissez-faire* individualism in economics, and an unlimited freedom to pursue experience and self-realisation or gratification in culture. The syncretism of our own time expresses the exhaustion of radical individualism. It shows us to be in search of community (*Gemeinschaft*) and primordial attachments. Hence the revival of certain cults from Eastern religions; hence the appeal of certain art-groups, meditation, mediating institutions, and so on. All these seek some assurance that coherent answers *are* available to what I would call the existential predicament that confronts every human being: how to face death; the nature of tragedy; the character of obligation; the encounter with love, etc. Modern liberalism has no answers to these questions. The answers offered by traditional religions were unsatisfactory. The individual was left on his own to grapple with them as best he might. As I have said in *The Cultural Contradictions of Capitalism*: the real problem of modernity is the problem of belief.

—And it was in that context that you called for "some conception of religion" as an answer to our "spiritual crisis." Practical people reflecting on this discussion might very well say: Yes, we all suffer from the disappearance of the old landmarks; and we all know that some of the modern anchorages have proved illusory—but how do we go about building a new "religion"? Doesn't the whole concept of faith posit the acceptance of untestable evidence? And doesn't modern civilisation teach us to resist any such thing? How does one envisage that our needs can be met, given the monopoly of rationalism and scepticism in our thinking and the awesome examples of "religions gone awry"—Stalin, Hitler, and Mao—only a heartbeat away in our collective memory?

Well, if my imaginary reader then turns to your book, he will find this answer:

> **"What religion can restore is the continuity of generations, returning us to the existential predicaments which are the ground of humility and care for others. Yet such a continuity cannot be manufactured, nor a cultural revolution engineered. That thread is woven out of those experiences which give one a tragic sense of life, a life that is lived on the knife-edge of finitude and freedom."**

Would you fault my imaginary reader for thinking that your prescription is extremely vague—that it is more likely to evoke in our minds associations with the kind of religiosity embodied, for example, in the Wagnerian music-drama than with "religion" as we employ that word in common usage?

BELL: But I do *not* prescribe. How could I? I am not a prophet. Let me emphasise what you have quoted: unlike artifacts and goods, religions cannot be "manufactured." They grow out of experiences or revelations and, to be successful, they have to be capable of continuing across generational time; otherwise they are just "cults" which quickly evaporate as the particular dilemma which has given impetus to them, such as the identity crisis of a specific generation, itself passes.

—One of the problems with any discussion of the revival of religion in a liberal-democratic society seems to me to be this: Religion offers a single key to man's problems in this world and (as the case may be) the next. This is the secret of its appeal, and this, I take it, is the "sense of coherence" of which you spoke a moment ago. Religion is holistic by definition; it makes universal demands on the faithful. If and when a modern religion does come into being it will not, because it cannot, make allowances for that multiplicity of "disjunctive realms" in

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public life which you hold to be essential to the survival of a liberal polity. If a sense of transcendence does take root in society, with all the rules and regulations that must go with its institutionalisation, I am as sure as anyone can be that the man-in-the-street (not to say the "new clergy") will want to apply it to every nook and cranny of the life of the individual and the life of society—which does spell intellectual absolutism, uniformity, and intolerance. That certainly is one lesson we can safely draw from the historical record of the higher religions, whether we are thinking of Judaism, Catholicism, or Islam.

For a recent example I invite you to think of the fanaticism of Chief Rabbi Shlomo Goren, leader of the religious revival in Israel, who threatened to bring down the Israeli Government if archaeologists did not stop digging on a site in Jerusalem which Rabbi Goren claimed was an ancient Jewish cemetery. He first threatened to issue an edict expelling Mr Zevulum Hammer, the Minister of Education, from his local synagogue unless the Minister stopped the digging; and when the Minister ordered the dig to be merely suspended pending an investigation by the Attorney-General, the Chief Rabbi was not satisfied. He said that he would submit the Minister to public disgrace by forbidding the reading of the Torah, initially in his own synagogue, then in all the synagogues of his home town, and ultimately in all the synagogues of Israel. A member of the Liberal Party in the Likud block spoke of Chief Rabbi Goren as "acting with the insanity which recalls the Dark Ages."

BELL: You are confusing two things: (*a*) the need for coherent answers to our existential questioning; and (*b*) the total diffusion of these answers to all parts of society. A religion does have to provide a set of coherent answers for those who accept the tenets of religion, but there is no reason for that coherent set of answers to be a total response to society as a whole. Max Weber has shown that religions arose out of the needs of certain specific strata of society and that they sought to express the cosmological or transcendental visions of these strata *without* making a total claim on the rest of society. I believe this to be true in our own time. The fact that we have many diverse groups in society will (it seems to me) lead to a diversity of religions, but not in the sense of wanting to *sweep over* the whole of man's activities in the whole of society.

Some of the great religions are, of course, on record as having done just that. Islam is the latest example with its claim of regarding everything different from Islam as heretical and therefore in error and therefore inviting a holy war on the infidel. Or there is the example of Catholicism with *its* claim that if you don't believe, you are in mortal error and your soul has to be saved despite you.

But *my* concern is Western society as it is today, and I am convinced that religion in our time is an effort to find meaning within private spheres. It is an irreversible fact of history that the great religions, which once dominated the entire range of society, are now restricted to the private domain. This is institutionally expressed in the separation of State and Church and, in the social sphere, in the Kantian notion that secular power must not impose morality on the individual.

BUT HOW, *to be more precise, do you envisage the rise of a religion in the private sphere? Would the Black Rastafarians, for example, qualify, with their credal hatred of the "white oppressor", their obsession with Black separateness, their worship of the late Emperor Haile Selassie as "God" and the use of cannabis as their "sacrament"? In England the Catholic Commission for Racial Justice has announced in its wisdom that Rastafarianism should be recognised as "a valid religious experience and way of life", and that Christians should consider allowing "Rastas" to use their churches.*

BELL: You are illustrating my point, though in a bizarre way. The Rastafarians are a cult. They have taken a particular experience and clothed it with the garments of ritual and of exorcism. I doubt that it has an appeal outside the particular experience of place, or across the passage of time.

When I say that religion will begin in the "private" sphere I mean that it will be the redefinition by individuals of what they seek. Nietzsche once said that "If life has a '*Why*', almost any '*How*' can be tolerated." Some individuals will seek that "*Why*" by a return to the past in order to find some continuity out of the threads of traditional beliefs, as do charismatics and evangelicals. Some will find it in an assimilation of Eastern modes. Some will seek the personalism of the small group.

Different groups search for something sacred in their lives, and then begin to endow it with a sense of ritual and awe giving that sacredness meaning. I am impressed by what Peter Berger, an American sociologist and theologian, says about "mediating institutions." These, says Berger, are called into being because there is strong reaction among people to the mammoth organisations of our civilisation. The megastructures of bureaucracy, welfare, industrial work and the like, are too impersonal to satisfy. Hence people want to return to small institutions and, more significantly, to caring communities: the family, church, voluntary organisations, and other groups of personal concern. It is there that their search for an aura of sacredness can be best satisfied.

But let me be clear: I do not predict that all this will happen. I am merely saying that it is a possibility, and if the possibility were to mature, religion in our time might take some of the forms I have tried to indicate. But, of course, it might take

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several others, such as a revival of the moralistic strain, which would go back to stressing simple notions of guilt, sin, and destructiveness, and speak in the symbolism of piety and homilies. Or one can envisage religion with an emphasis on mysticism and meditation, which is already gaining ground in the USA among natural scientists and certain groups of artists.

None of these group religions would be cultic because, unlike the trendy pseudo-religious enthusiasms of the 1960s and 1970s, they do not derive purely from the psychological crisis of the inner self, from the frantic search for novelty or from asking: "What can I do to cure my neurosis?" They derive from a sense of community, and that is the vital distinction. Whereas (if you like) the cults of the 1960s and '70s were due to the "breakdown of therapy", the new religiosities come out of the efforts of small groups of people to found communities in which they can live their own lives.

ALLOW ME TO MAKE *two broad points. Religions or, if you like, religiosities, that rise from small groups of like-minded people sharing a sense of the sacred, a sense of belonging and common symbols, have, in fact, been tried in very recent history. I mention for example the "Circles" assembled around Rimbaud and Mallarmé in France and Stefan George in Germany.*

The religious sentiments nurtured by these were strikingly similar to the group loyalties you have just described. Both were, as we know from their philosophies, reactions to the technological gigantism, depersonalisation, and dehumanisation of modern society; both sought, to use your words, the mediation of small "institutions"—in their case the "Circle." Yet, from the religious point of view, both remained ineffectual because both were purely aesthetic in inspiration; because they rejected institutionalisation and, therefore, expired with their protagonists. For all these reasons I would, with all due respect, doubt the social significance of small-group religions. They may comfort and inspire a coterie (and that is no small virtue) but will lack the appeal of religion in the sense in which we have generally come to think of it—one that claims divine authority to teach, to initiate and to discipline.

My second point is a reinforcement of the one I have made a little earlier—that a transcendentally inspired religion on the one hand, and a plurality of views and institutions on the other, do not go well together. I take your point that the kind of group religions you have in mind as appropriate to our time need not have a totalistic impact on society; yet my experience tells me that the very first thing any "religious" type of feeling, thought, and ideology does is to make universalistic and indeed totalitarian claims on us.

For the psychological clue involved I can think of no better example than one decisive episode in the life of Vissarion Belinsky in 19th-century Russia. When Hegel's dictum "What is, ought to be" was first explained to him (by Bakunin) he saw his enthusiastic support of the Czar and Autocracy fully vindicated. But when, only one year later, he was given to understand that, according to the dialectic, Hegel's words really meant that "What is, ought **not** *to be", he changed his mind, became a fervent revolutionary socialist and applied his not inconsiderable intellectual powers to undermining the Autocracy through the whole range of Russian life and letters. (Belinsky—we must give him credit—had the good sense to admit: "I become terrible when I get some mystical absurdity or other into my head. . . .")*

The wild oscillation of Belinsky's mental compass is, of course, representative of the 19th-century Russian intelligentsia's reckless enthusiasm for borrowed ideas. But for me it is more than that: it shows man, once possessed of a religious or semi-religious creed, to be absolutely bent on making it seamless and all-embracing.

BELL: About the symbolist circles in France or the George *Kreis* in Germany, you are not negating but simply restating my point. These were primarily aesthetic movements, reacting against bourgeois sensibility or a technological world by seeking to shock or to withdraw into a hermetic circle; and the like. The difficulty is that by setting up such analogies you risk the distortion of historical contexts. Aestheticism was, as I said, one response to the break-up of traditional religious authority. In the case of André Malraux there was even an effort to set up a "religion of art." But that was a forced effort. It has been the failure of aestheticism as well as the failure of political religions that becomes the impulse for a new search today.

The Russian intelligentsia of the 19th century is a rather special case—a case of outsize loyalties. Belinsky in particular was representative of a generation which attached itself to causes with incredible passion and applied the teachings of abstract creeds to the personal lives of its members. We have examples of this throughout the philosophy and literature of the period. There is a novel by Alexander Herzen which deals with the life of a young Russian medical student who leaves Russia in order to immerse himself in the wonderful culture of the West. He comes to the salons of Germany, and he impresses everyone with his wit and enthusiasm. But the Germans make him sit down to study the prosaic subjects of anatomy and physiology; and he, of course, feels bitterly disappointed because *he* had come to ask the *big* questions of life. This habit of asking nothing but the big questions of life caught up with two or three generations of Russian intellectuals in the 19th century.

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It is probably true to say that the Russian milieu and Russian culture tend to dramatise suffering and therefore lend themselves more readily to religious types of thinking and their sweeping application than would be the case in Western societies. And this is as true of the Soviet Union today as it was of Russia at the time of Belinsky. I am convinced that the one country in the world where one would see a very sharp effervescence of religion—if the shackles of the Communist State were removed—is Russia. Why? Because life is so arid there; because it has no celebrations; because marriage means registration at the clerk's office, and all the other stations that mark one's personal life are so incredibly tawdry. The Russian people have suffered immensely, and there is a sense in Russia of the individual's complete helplessness in the face of the total power of the Party and the State. Pasternak, Brodsky, Sinyavsky, Solzhenitsyn, and more recently (1982) Svetlana Alliluyeva[2] have all said that the Russian people are ready for a religious revival; and I am sure they are.

The cultural rhythms of Western society are not necessarily those of Russia, and it is an important part of human consciousness to be aware of the consequences of the sort of reckless intellectual passions which governed the lives of so many 19th-century Russian intellectuals—with Belinsky as perhaps the most formative example—and went on to govern the lives of their successors in the Communist movement in the 20th century. Large numbers of people, particularly those who have gone through the Communist movement, *have* become aware of how disastrous fanatical dedication to extreme principles can be and have drawn the consequences. Ignazio Silone is perhaps our purest example. He, more than any of the others, realised that faith becomes a monster if it is not grounded in a genuine human community. And this is the main point of my argument. If religion is to arise anew in Western civilisation it will do so out of genuine communities of work or genuine communities of *caritas*.

Of course, not everyone disappointed by the fanaticism of secular faiths will go all the way with Silone, but the sentiments he has expressed in *Bread and Wine* (1937) and the books that followed are harbingers of things to come. They may, I readily concede, be a long time in coming because the rhythms of culture move on a very different scale from those of economics and politics: there is, in culture, a time of seed, a time of maturation, a time of growth and fulfilment; and there is no predicting how much hibernation, how many fresh starts and how many withdrawals a cultural trend will undergo before it asserts itself visible to the naked eye. But I am persuaded that Silone has broadly indicated the way of what we may expect to follow.

—But isn't it remarkable that some of the best-known former Communists did not opt out of the Party simply to oppose Communism on intellectual and political grounds, but embraced Catholicism as a "counter-religion"? Silone may himself be one example, but Douglas Hyde is an even better, for his intellectual career spanned the whole spectrum from the "Daily Worker" to the news-editorship of the "Catholic Herald." In any case, Communists I have known argue, even after their disillusion with the creed and the Party, that the Party offered the only genuine human community of work and caring they ever knew, and that their "faith" rested in this very reassuring human anchorage.

What is there in the faith and dedication of a practising Communist that would not satisfy your criteria of small-group religion? The absence of any sense of the transcendental? Of that "aching void in the soul" which Catholic writers often depict as the malady which afflicted ancient society and hurried the advent of Christianity?

BELL: Your question is very curious. It is asked as if the history of the past forty years, or if the phenomenon of Stalinism, had never existed. Surely one has to separate out the initial impulses and the aura from the reality. Communism established new hierarchies and privileges as great if not greater than the ones it replaced. In the deeper, cultural sense, it became an idolatry, a Moloch that destroyed all those who would not submit. What Communist still believes in that faith and dedication today? You may know the (apocryphal) story of the Polish Communist leader who was escorting the former Queen Mother of Belgium through Warsaw. She asked if she could enter the Cathedral. He stopped and said: "You go in—I cannot." "Are you not a Catholic", she asked? "Yes, a believing one, but not a practising one." "But you *are* a Communist", she said. "Yes", he replied, "a practising one, but not a believing one."

3. Religion & Culture

IT MIGHT BE APPROPRIATE *at this stage to remind ourselves of what you say about the "disjunction of realms" in "The Cultural Contradictions of Capitalism." You see certain sources of tension between*

"a social structure (primarily techno-economic) which is bureaucratic and hierarchical, and a polity which believes, formally, in equality and participation; between a social structure that is

[2] "At some crucial point, faith springs up, like flames of hidden fire . . . we might still see it again in Russia one day, because in Russia faith has always been such a powerful force of the people. It is still there." Svetlana to Malcolm Muggeridge, *The Listener*, 4 March 1982.

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organised fundamentally in terms of roles and specalisation, and a culture which is concerned with the enhancement and fulfilment of the self and the 'whole' person . . . In these adversary relations, one sees the disjunction of realms."

Applied to what we have both been saying about religion, one may summarise your position in the statement that "future religions will be confined to the realm of culture and not spin off into the other realms", and mine in the statement that religions must, because each offers a unique interpretation of the divine will, affirm their claim on both the loyalties and activities of man. In other words (if you will bear with me playing the Devil's advocate while upholding the case of God), I tend to believe that religion cannot be religion unless it ignores the disjunction of realms.

BELL: But you are taking no account of the fact that religion in our time has no secular power—which it had in the Middle Ages and after—to force its will upon society. It has neither the political nor the material resources to do so. Quite inevitably, and quite irrespective of my own analysis, it becomes more and more a matter of the private sphere—a cultural matter. The only society today which has sufficient power in the public realm to enforce a certain set of beliefs is Soviet society where the Communist system can and does impose its doctrine in all spheres of life. But Communist society is not Western society, and is not our concern at the moment. The revival of religion in the West can only take place in the realm of culture—and by culture (to repeat) I mean a many-sided effort to answer certain existential predicaments which confront every human being. More particularly, I mean those endeavours in poetry, painting, music, fiction, ritual and religious liturgy which express the meaning of existence in imaginative form. Historically, culture and religion are fused.

*—What then (to come back to a point we have not answered) disqualifies the Circles of Mallarmé and Stefan George from being seen as genuine "*ekklesias*" (assemblies) of religious inspiration? They were richly invested with an aura of the sacred; they shared a symbolism and a sense of liturgy, and the Stefan George* Kreis *even had its appointed deity in the person of the youth Maximin. I have (as I have said) my own reasons for believing that these were not genuine religions; but I'd be interested to know why they do not qualify in your terms of reference, seeing that they satisfy, on the face of it, your criteria of group religion.*

BELL: These were, as we have both said, aesthetic movements. Aristotle observed that if a man is not a citizen of the *polis*—if, that is, he refuses to accept his obligations as a citizen to other citizens—he becomes a beast or a god. The aesthetic movements tried in their different ways to be both. Their dedication to aesthetic beauty robbed them of any sense of limits and therefore of moral norms. Their conviction that they were free to explore experience no matter where it might lead them legitimated the exploitation of demonic impulses—murder, sodomy, sadism, and so on. The culmination of this abuse of freedom was reached in André Gide's novel *The Caves of the Vatican* where the protagonist, sitting in a train, decides to murder a man totally unknown to him simply because he wants to demonstrate that he *can* exercise unlimited power—that he can be God-like. This was the essence of aestheticism: the search for the satisfaction of bestiality, and the consequent denial of the humanity of others.

—If you were saying all this about the noisy and intellectually vacuous "aesthetic" sub-cultures of the 1960s, with their mindless insistence on the visual display of cruelty, sexual perversion, and the rest—I would agree with you. But I don't think you would seriously want to maintain that Rimbaud, Mallarmé, Stefan George, Hofmannsthal, and the poets, writers, historians and philosophers assembled around them in the 1880-1925 period were prophets of violence and bestiality. Indeed, the opposite seems to me to be true.

The whole emphasis of the philosophy of the George Circle in its maturity was on the revival of Greek humanism—on the Apollonian principle of restraint, firm limits, and stability—on Sein *(being), as distinct from* Werden *(becoming), the Dionysian view of the world as eternally emergent, evanescent, and all-permissive. To associate, no matter how remotely, the "Flower People" of California, "Mash", "Catch 22", "I am Curious (Yellow)" and "Deep Throat" with the great Symbolist movement in France and Germany around the turn of the century would be doing the latter a grave injustice. But I am sure that was not your meaning. . . .*

BELL: Of course it wasn't, and I am not saying that individual members of the Symbolist movement were bestial. What I am saying is that they had a message which said that in art and in the imagination everything is permitted. Even in the George Circle you had obscurantists like Ludwig Klages, with his demonic beliefs and practices as a "*Kosmiker.*" The essential point is: What was it the Symbolists were asking that was legitimate? And they were saying that in art everything was permitted. Now, once you accept that, it is only a question of time before someone comes along and says: If it is permitted in art, why not in *life*? And why not make your own life a work of art and thus act out the kind of things which were formerly thought to be permissible only in the imagination? And this is precisely what has happened in the last 50 years or so. The distinction between art and life

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has become blurred. The 1960s saw the bohemian life-style, once limited to small coteries, acted out on the giant screen of the mass media and then on the streets of Paris and Berlin. The artist-hero became a powerful figure. Young artists declared: "Revolution is poetry", and they acted on it.

So why do I say (to answer your question) that the types of initiatives that came out of various aesthetic groups do not fulfil the criteria of religions as I define them?

The alternative religions I envisage would be redemptive religions based on mediating institutions; the aesthetic movements are not like that. Secondly, they would speak for the insights of small groups and thus reject any ambition to define a model for the entire society. The logic of aestheticism, on the contrary, led its adherents from an all-permissive artistic universalism to the invasion of society with the destructive creed that in society, too, everything is permitted. These are two entirely different logics.

IT IS ALL VERY WELL *(one could argue) for a Harvard professor to make these fine distinctions between various "realms" in our civilisation, because he speaks from the pluralist, tolerant, and liberal Anglo-American experience. But the historical consciousness of large parts of the European continent has been formed by a different tradition which makes it more difficult for us to imagine that the "realms" are apart, or that they could be kept apart if there were a genuine religious revival.*

The European experience I have in mind is marked by milestones such as the theocratic, egalitarian despotism of John of Leyden and his Anabaptist "Saints" in 16th-century Münster; the occult seances of the "Enthusiasts" of the Enlightenment; the elevation of the "Goddess of Reason" and the "Supreme Being" under Robespierre and the Jacobins; the apotheosis of nationalism through the length and breadth of 19th-century Europe; and, of course, Lenin, Stalin and Hitler. Heretics displayed the same totalistic frame of mind as their persecutors—"enlightened" rationalists were as little prepared to forgo worship and the celebration of liturgy and public cults as was the Church they attacked. The "religious" temper was all-pervasive.

I see the European inclination to defeat the fanaticism of the "unrighteous" with an equally ferocious fanaticism of the "righteous" encapsulated in one characteristic example: the case of the "Vekhi" (Landmarks) group of Russian writers. The seven authors of this famous collection of essays in 1909 were prominent members of the intelligentsia, six of them with Marxist backgrounds—Nikolai Berdiaev, Peter Struve, Sergei Bulgakov, Bogdan Kistiakovski, A. S. Izgoev, and Semen Frank. Disillusioned by their own radical creed and the violence and destructiveness of the 1905 revolution, they urged the Russian intelligentsia not only to renounce the narrow materialist interpretation of the world, but to recast its whole frame of mind. Their credentials for doing so were impeccable.

> **"In reproaching it [Semen Frank wrote] they are passing judgment on a milieu with which they are closely connected, and their indictment is at the same time a self-indictment, a re-examination of paths which they themselves have taken."**

Here is how, in one revealing passage, Sergei Bulgakov castigated the failures of the Russian revolutionary intelligentsia:

> **"A certain otherworldliness, an eschatological dream of the City of God and the future reign of justice (under various socialist pseudonyms), and a striving for the salvation of mankind—if not from sin, then from suffering—are, as we know, the immutable and distinctive peculiarities of the Russian intelligentsia. Anguish at the disharmony of life and a yearning to overcome it distinguish the foremost *intelligent*-writers . . . In this striving for the Future City, beside which earthly reality pales, the intelligentsia has perhaps preserved in their most obvious form some features of its lost life in the Church. How many times, as I listened to the stormy speeches of the atheistic left bloc in the Second State Duma, did I hear—strange to say!—echoes of the psychology of Orthodoxy, which suddenly revealed the effects of its spiritual indoctrination . . . Rejecting Christianity and its norms, the intelligentsia accepts along with atheism—or, rather, instead of atheism—the dogmas of the religion of man-Godhood in one or another of the variants elaborated by the West European Enlightenment; then it turns this religion into idolatry . . . The heroic *intelligent*, therefore, is not content with the role of a modest worker. His dream is to be the saviour of mankind or, at least, of the Russian people. . . ."** [3]

I have, it is true, chosen (as I chose with Belinsky) an exaggerated example: the credal absolutism and dogmatism of the Russian revolutionary intelligentsia. But it will, I think, do duty to underline my question: Can human beings, once they are fully convinced of the truth of a religion (or an ideology), be expected to confine it to the sphere of culture? And can religion so confined merit the name of religion?

BELL: You are taking a very specific situation—a group of Russian intellectuals who became religious, and some of whom became Slavophiles reacting to their own revolutionary Marxist past and the world that past had tried to create. We

[3] "Heroism & Asceticism: Reflections on the Religious Nature of the Russian Intelligentsia" in *Vekhi* (1909).

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have to remind ourselves once again that the very nature of the political passions of the 19th century was to embrace the whole world and seek totalistic solutions.

It may be that my position—though I would not quite agree with you in thinking of it as Anglo-American—does reflect the values and historical experience of Western liberal democratic society; and to that extent my views about the advent of new forms of religiosity in the private sphere may have only a limited application. The Russian mind has always moved along different paths. Traditionally, Russia has been a patrimonial society (as Richard Pipes has shown in *Russia under the Old Régime*), that is: state-run, centralised, and dominated by the heritage of Byzantium in all important respects. The very notion of "civil society", with autonomous realms existing side by side with one another, was, and is, alien to the Russian mentality. "Society" is very much a Western concept.

In no way do I claim that my vision of a religious revival covers the whole world. Quite obviously it cannot cover Islam, Buddhism, and the Soviet Union. All I am doing is looking at the signs of the times in Western bourgeois society which has seen the exhaustion of radical individualism in economics and of the radical self in culture, and is now groping for a new sense of community. I suspect that this search for a new communal identity has in it elements which will fashion themselves into different types of religiosity. And since my analysis comes out of a very specific discussion of Western bourgeois society and Western liberalism, I would certainly not generalise and apply it to other parts of the world which have different traditions and histories.

So I would go along with you part of the way. Of course my prediction (if that is what it is) does not apply to the Soviet Union, precisely because of the mentality described by the writers of *Vekhi*; but neither would the *Vekhi* type of attack be relevant to the affairs of the Western intelligentsia.

There has grown up in Western society, through the decentralisation of the polity and the recognition of private morality, a tradition which delimits the autonomy of the public and private realms. It has enabled members of Western society to resist totalising influences of every sort, not least the totalistic claims of the Church and Marxism.

We might, of course, speculate what forms religiosity might take in the Soviet Union if and when the great subterranean religious inclinations of the Russian people are allowed to break surface. If one looks ahead to the time when the Soviet political system breaks up, as it *will* break up—not necessarily through "liberalisation" but because it is increasingly hard to run a vast and complex society from a small centre of control—there will follow an enlargement of the area of decision-making and discussion of the sort that made a faltering beginning under Khrushchev but was stopped in its tracks by Brezhnev. The resulting pluralism and compartmentalisation might create the conditions under which a Sinyavsky or a Solzhenitsyn would, rather on the pattern of the *Vekhi* authors, seek religious answers to the human predicament, whether under the auspices of Orthodoxy or outside it. But the really tantalising fact for the Soviet Union and the Russian people is a statistical one: according to the latest census, about 50% of the Soviet population is non-Russian. The dominant experience of whatever system follows Soviet Communism may well be the march of Islam; and that will introduce a whole new dimension into Russian life if, that is, the Islamic peoples in Soviet Asia have not asserted their independence by then and become separate states.

4. *Lukács's Messianic Utopianism*

WHILE WE ARE *on Russian traditions and psychology: one of the remarkable differences between the kind of religiosity we can now see slowly coming to the surface in the Soviet Union and in the West is that the Russian variety seems to be unconnected with any "identity crisis" of the young, whereas the Western kind is, as you have shown, strongly motivated by it. My own explanation would be that in Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union society as a whole and the young in particular are fully and often dangerously committed. Where Stalinism, Gulag, Russian occupation, national independence and sheer physical want are the landmarks in a young person's mental landscape, little time or energy is left over to paint in the colours of private anguish. You have to be wealthy, idle, and alienated from the mainstream of society to be able to sport an "identity crisis." And I sometimes wonder whether it isn't better for the long-term sanity of man to have to ask "How do I fight off the KGB?" or "How do I defeat Zomo?"*[4]*—than to be nursing one's frustrations on some Californian commune tormented by the question "Which is the 'authentic' I?..."*

BELL: The lack of an identity crisis in Russia tends to obscure something else, equally fascinating. The Russian mind appears to be governed by certain *imagos*, certain models drawn from literature, with which the Russian people identify. When Lenin says he will "tolerate no Oblomovs"—this has a meaning which is immediately understood by the Russian people. When Russians write or talk together they will refer to Ivan Karamazov, or Raskolnikov, or Bazarov, or to the characters in *War and Peace*, as though they were real beings in relations to whom the char-

[4] Polish Security Police.

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acter and achievements of individual Russians can be judged: "He is an Oblomov type", they will say of a feckless and indolent man; "He is a Stavrogin"; he is this figure, he is that character. And this ability to transpose *imagos* on to real people, and induce the Russian people to live with them, is the great power of 19th-century Russian literature. So, while it is true that the Russians do not suffer from an identity crisis of the sort we can see in Western society, they do suffer from a permanent crisis of *identification*: with whom do I identify? And this crisis of identification is a serious one because the literary *imagos* are extremely potent. I know of no other literature which presents so many vivid models.

It is, incidentally, a great black mark against *Soviet* fiction that Soviet novelists have failed to create a single character which ordinary Russian men and women could assimilate as part of their experience. The so-called "Soviet Man" is a *papier mâché* figure. It evokes absolutely nothing in the Russian mind.

—The "Vekhi" group of writers accused the 19th-century Russian radical intelligentsia of treating the catechism of revolutionary socialism as a substitute religion. A hundred years later, and in somewhat different form, the "heresy" (if that is what it is) persists but is more openly stated. Let me ask you a question I asked György Lukács in the course of a long conversation I had with him in 1968.[5]

I was much interested at the time in the Marxist-Christian dialogue in which a number of Czech reform-Communists had taken a significant part. I mentioned to Lukács that one of these, the Czech Communist philosopher Machovec, had recently claimed on the pages of the Austrian journal "Neues Forum" that, for a Marxist, participation in the life of society under the guidance of reason was a way of partaking of the eternal. This, I said, was a religious concept—society usurping the role of the Godhead with which the devout merge in some mystic union.

Would you *agree that, for a religiously minded Marxist, "society" and the Party would provide between them not only that feeling of safety and shared values of which you spoke a little earlier, but also a transcendental* telos*: a notion that the salvation of mankind is a higher good than the salvation of any one of its members, and so on? After all, some of the egalitarian heresies of the 15th and 16th centuries were built on an arguably similar idea.*

Lukács, of course, rejected the idea; but is it mere idle speculation to envisage a situation in the Soviet Union in which a populist Russian Marxism would merge with the revival of Russian Orthodoxy and furnish between them a new sense of religiosity? Some would indeed argue that that religiosity has already arrived and has unpleasantly ultranationalistic undertones (and worse).

BELL: I do not exclude the possibility. But let me take up Lukács's rejection of the idea you put to him. For some years before his conversion to Bolshevism Lukács dominated an extraordinary study group in Budapest—with Michael Polányi, Frederick Antal, Karl Mannheim and Arnold Hauser as members. They were concentrating on Kierkegaard and Dostoevsky and the range of moral problems posed by these writers. Lukács himself (as we know from his writings of the time) felt that only evil could result from imposing a new order on society by violence; and yet, after a great deal of agonising, he was converted to Bolshevism during a single week by what one might call a sudden revelation.

The process of his conversion is of more than passing interest. In the last pages of his early (1914–1915) *The Theory of the Novel* Lukács indicated that we live in an "epoch of absolute sinfulness." He was profoundly involved at the time with the work of the Russian revolutionary terrorist and writer Boris Savinkov (Lukács dedicated *The Theory of the Novel* to his first wife, Yelena Andreyevna Grabenko, who had taken part in the activities of the Social Revolutionary Terrorist Group) who spelt out for him all the practical dilemmas raised by this sinfulness: Is it right to take the life of another? How do I attain purity? and the like.

Lukács, depicted as Naphta in Thomas Mann's *The Magic Mountain*, gives us an authentic sketch of the religious context in which his conversion to Bolshevism must be understood. In a sinful world, he argues, the innocence of the Child of God ("*Gotteskindschaft*") can only be attained by striking terror into the rest of society.

> **"The dictatorship of the proletariat, the politico-economic means of salvation demanded by our age, does not mean domination for its own sake and in perpetuity; but rather in the sense of a temporary abrogation, in the Sign of the Cross, of the contradiction between spirit and force; in the sense of overcoming the world by mastering it; in a transcendental, a transitional sense, in the sense of the Kingdom. The proletariat has taken up the task of Gregory the Great, his religious zeal burns within it, and as little as he may it withhold its hand from the shedding of blood. Its task is to strike terror into the world for the healing of the world, that man may finally achieve salvation and deliverance, and win back at length to freedom from law and from distinction of classses, to his original status as child of God."**

—So convincing indeed is the religious tone of Naphta's lecture that Settembrini, putting a sudden

[5] George Urban, "A Conversation with Lukács", ENCOUNTER, October 1971.

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end to the conversation, calls out mockingly: "Goodbye, padre!"

BELL: Yes, Lukács's whole agony is religious, the whole language is religious and this is, as I have said, by no means accidental. Before his rapid conversion to Bolshevism he soaked himself in Kierkegaard and Dostoevsky, and no man who had immersed himself so completely in the work of these writers could escape the religious force which animated them.

You said that Lukács rejected Machovec's reasoning—

—Yes, this is what he said to me:

"A great deal of theological language has been smuggled into the Marxist analysis of society. I reject this as irrelevant. What Machovec says is true but it's a platitude. In a sense every sentient being is part of the 'eternal', i.e. of reality as it develops. In that sense a socialist participation in the life of society is sharing an aspect of eternality. But one ought to beware of mixing one's analogies. There is no nonsense in the world to which some distinguished physicist or other will not subscribe and give it some elevated name, usually borrowed from theology or art. There is the case of one famous scientist who said that entropy was nature's way of atoning for original sin."

BELL: There is, of course, a large piece of truth in what Lukács says, but what he says is irrelevant to his own situation. *His* dilemma arose out of *problems*, not metaphors, and the essence of that dilemma was: How does one justify acts of murder and violence in the pursuit of the Communist revolution? The context is important because Lukács is conducting a hidden dialogue here with the man who was in many ways his early mentor: Max Weber.

In the last of his four famous lectures, *Politik als Beruf* (1919), Weber argued that ideological messianism can produce some strange results: those who preach their love of opposing all violence suddenly find themselves calling for a last act of violence to end all violence. What these people do not realise is that they are trafficking with the Devil. In a clear hint at Lukács's early book *Die Seele Und Die Formen*, Weber concludes: He who seeks the "salvation of souls" should not seek it along the avenue of politics.

All this fits Lukács's position down to a fine detail. Lukács was, to use Weber's words, a preacher of the totalistic interpretation of Marx ("*Gesinnungsethiker*", "*chiliastischer Prophet*")—a man who had, as he himself later admitted (in his 1967 preface to *History and Class Consciousness*), written his early (and best-known) books while in the grip of "messianic utopianism." [6]

5. Threads of the Past

YOUR POINT IS *(if I may offer a quick summary) that, however Lukács may have rationalised his position in* 1967, *he had originally embraced Bolshevism and conducted his hidden dialogue with Max Weber on essentially religious grounds, his "religion" being man's salvation through a classless, and therefore just and peaceful, society. Given the existence of "original sin", however, this harmonious state of affairs could only be attained (or, in Naphta's presentation, reattained) by a final act of injustice and violence—a sweep, if you like, of "messianic woes" which earlier revolutionary millenarians expected to precede the Second Coming, and Marx himself foresaw when he wrote:*

"The present generation resembles the Jews whom Moses led through the wilderness. It must not only conquer a new world, it must also perish in order to make room for people who will be equal to a new world."

Now, all this would strike me as coming pretty close to what Machovec, and other Communist heresiarchs involved in the Christian-Marxist dialogue, must have had in mind. What we have here is a millenarian "scenario" in which the "righteous" (the proletariat), having put Antichrist to the sword, rejoice for ever in a state of paradisiac innocence. In which case I take some quiet satisfaction from your analysis, because it shows Lukács, the sophisticated materialist, to be a man of deeply religious temper—something, as a former student of his, I always suspected.

BELL: Lukács's case is a good example of what I would call "the theory of two truths" or, if you like, "the theory of the second-degree lie." A man like Marcuse could talk about demystification and do it using the most mystifying language. Lukács's double-talk was of a more complicated kind.

In 1967 Lukács authorised the publication in English of his early (1922) *Geschichte und Klassenbewusstsein* by the New-Left Merlin Press in Britain (in 1960 he had, unsuccessfully, refused a request by a group of French ex-Communists for a French translation to be printed), appending to it a new preface. In it he makes two points which are germane to our problem. First, he tells us that his repudiation of the book, soon after his arrival in Stalin's Russia in 1933, was his "entry ticket" to the Party. What he does *not* say (and to understand Lukács one has to know not only what he

[6] I have written of the "hidden relation" and the private exchange of letters between Weber and Lukács in my essay-memoir, "First Love and Early Sorrows" in *Partisan Review*, No 4, 1981.

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does put in but also what he omits to say, for Lukács works in loops within loops and whirls within whirls) is that in his public recantation of the book he had ascribed his errors to Max Weber's influence. This is, as I see it, significant corroboration of the view that the hidden dialogue about morality and religion was indeed between Weber and himself.

Secondly, Lukács observes in his new preface—without, of course, saying so in so many words—that Fichte's subjective idealism has been superseded "on an objectively higher plane" by Hegel. What does this mean? Remember that on the last pages of *The Theory of the Novel* Lukács, quoting Fichte, complains that we live "in the epoch of absolute sinfulness." Now, writing in 1967, he asserts that Hegel has been triumphant. His meaning is clear: with "Hegel triumphant" we are approaching a new *telos*; the "end of history", the consummation of "Absolute Spirit"; the arrival of the proletarian utopia; the return of "the innocence of the children of God." This is a religious concept, and Lukács was, within the limits implied by our discussion, a "religious" man.

—You are making a very fine point which I think Lukács would, while rejecting it, appreciate. When in 1968 I raised the problem of religiosity with him I did it on a more workaday plane, but close (as I now look back upon it) to your concept of religion. Let me quote a passage from my account of our conversation as published shortly after Lukács's death in ENCOUNTER*:*

"One might [I said] stretch Marxism in this direction or that, but could it ever give satisfactory answers to some of our oldest problems? Marxism tries to explain *la condition humaine* and that, as I understood him, was also what his *Ontology* was about. But could it go no further? Some years ago Ignazio Silone remarked to me in a conversation that as long as Communism had nothing to say on the question of death, its claim to command man's loyalties would remain limited. Communism, Silone thought, was not a fully self-contained world-view. One of man's prime needs was to be offered some explanation or consolation in the face of death. Communism was unable to do that."

***Lukács*: "Marxism has nothing to do with life after death; the mind disintegrates with the body and there is no more to be said. I could never really understand this need to be consoled or comforted. I have never felt the slightest desire to seek any contact with supernatural forces in church or elsewhere. Religion, to my mind, is a substitute for a poorly lived life. The secret of life, and perhaps of the survival of one's works after life, is a sensible and rational (*értelmes*) existence.... Fairly early in my career I discovered certain truths about human behaviour which led me to Marx; and I have tried, in a long life, to broaden my understanding of these truths according to my lights. My framework has not changed."**

How does all this tie in with what you have just said about Lukács's sense of religion?

BELL: If one equates religion with the supernatural, Lukács is not religious. Neither would most intellectuals be today. But I said that religion, in the larger cultural meaning, is an effort to provide a coherent response, which transcends particular time and place, to the recurrent *existential* predicaments of life: to the comprehension of death, the meaning of tragedy, the inexorable double binds within which life places us. Recall: Lukács was soaked in the life and problems of Kierkegaard. (He was one of the first to write of Kierkegaard in the revival of his work in the early 20th century.) Both took a "leap of faith": Kierkegaard to a Christian God; Lukács to the God of History. Where Kierkegaard landed, we do not know. But we do know that Lukács stumbled.

YOU SAID A LITTLE EARLIER *that the Russian people under Soviet rule are more likely to come forward as vehicles of a new sense of religion than any of the Western nations. I wonder whether this isn't, in a sense, already happening. I am thinking of Solzhenitsyn's extraordinary impact on Western society. When Solzhenitsyn began to appear on Western television screens, public reaction was profound and instantaneous. Here was a man who had plumbed the depths of suffering and spoke to us with the true voice of religion. The contrast with trendy anti-nuclear clerics, "Sunday Christians", "World-Council-of-Churches-Progressives" and the like was manifest. As in medieval times, the man of God had come "as a stranger from the peripheries."*

Walter Schubart's prophecy (in "Europa und die Seele des Ostens", 1938) that the Russian people would redeem Western society from its Prometheanism and materialism because it alone has been steeled, under Bolshevism, in the battle with Antichrist, seems a trifle less far-fetched today than it was some 40 years ago. "Christ is alive here!", Svetlana says in her letter to Malcolm Muggeridge.

BELL: We have to make a distinction here between two aspects of Solzhenitsyn's impact on the Western world. Everyone respects Solzhenitsyn's heroism, especially because, in the modern world, there are few authentic heroes (as soon as one appears he is trivialised by television). But once Solzhenitsyn begins to talk in Slavophile accents, many people tend to have second thoughts about the path he is taking. I would, therefore, though acknowledging with due homage Solzhenitsyn's heroism, recoil (with Raymond Aron and others)

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from his Slavophile messianism.

As to Solzhenitsyn being seen as a harbinger of a revival of religiosity in Russia, and your argument that the power of Russian religiosity might become, as it were, a pace-setter for us all: I would resist that reasoning. I have no doubt that a Russian religious revival would evoke an emotional response in the West, but, for the reasons I have already stated, I do not believe that the forms and cultural concomitants of a new Russian religiosity would be transferable to Western society.

—But aren't you, I wonder, opposed to Solzhenitsyn's position because he seeks to revive religious **universalism**, *whereas your preference, if I read you correctly, is for a neatly separate mental compartment called "religion" to which one could, from time to time, resort in search of fellowship, consolation and a sense of holiness, but which would have no, or only minimal, influence on the other "realms"? And isn't this typically the position of one who wills rationality, pragmatism and "piecemeal social engineering" with the* **intellectual** *part of his self, but wills, at the same time, the fellowship of faith and perhaps even a little of the "Cloud of Unknowing" with his* **intuitive** *self? In which case we are talking about something that you would, I suspect, call "making legitimate use of the disjunction of realms", but I would be more inclined to call the "fragmentation of modern man in a world without guideposts."*

BELL: I don't want you to think that I completely reject Solzhenitsyn's religious sentiments. In fact, his case is in some ways apposite to my argument. Max Weber shows that new religions in the past arose when charismatic prophets came along to tear down the walls of tradition. They carried within their personalities a sense of grace which enabled them to proclaim a new faith.

My argument is this. The world has become antinomian. Who defends tradition today? Who defends institutions? Modern religiosity will arise (if it does arise), not out of the destruction of encrusted institutions, but out of an attempt to search for the past and re-weave our threads with the past, because today *that* represents a break with existing traditions. Solzhenitsyn's religiosity is of that sort.

If one asks a modern man, "Who are you?", he would say: "I am *I*!" In a traditional society a totally different kind of an answer would be given—and no other would be thinkable—"I am Ivan Sergeievich Pavlov", "I am Isaac Ben Abraham", "I am Ali Ben Ahmed", "I am the son of my father." The link with the past was manifest.

Now, the modern effort to return to the past is not all of a piece, and cannot be, because the past is different for different people. Hence the way in which we may pick up the threads of religion—whether it be a redemptive religion, a mystical religion, a moralistic or even Slavophile religion—will be different for different groups of people. This is not compartmentalisation. It is affirming modes of diversity within the private sphere of our lives.

AREN'T YOU GIVING *perhaps undue emphasis to the "loss of the past" because you are speaking from the American experience? I would have thought that the link with the past is quite alive in all West European countries; yet I cannot see that the decline of religiosity has been any the less marked in Western Europe than it has been in America, and I am a little doubtful whether a keener sense of the European past would lead to a keener sense of religion in Europe.*

Don't you think that for religion to be spontaneously brought back into our lives we would have to experience something much more incisive and indeed brutal than a mere desire for the retrieval of our sense of the sacred and our links with the past—something in the nature of an apocalyptic nuclear war or some universal ecological disaster? Can we ignore the well-attested creative spiritual effects of suffering?

BELL: Without denying my nationality, I am as much a Jew as an American—within my breast there are two souls which, so to speak, beat together in harmony and, maybe, at times in disharmony. But certainly as a Jew I have a very acute sense of the past. Judaism is a religion of collective memory. Four times a year every Jew is enjoined to go to the synagogue and say a prayer for the dead. In other words, my insistence that a new sense of religiosity must go together with reknitting our threads with the past is not due to a feeling that *I* have lost my connections with the past. I have not. But even of America it is not quite true to say that it suffers from historical amnesia. Yes, America is a much more recent society than Europe, but on closer examination you will find that in many parts of the US, too, there is a deep attachment to American history and especially to regional traditions.

Now, all this ties up with the problem of *modernity*. The very nature of accepting the new is to repudiate the old. The very idea that what is new is good, that the avant-garde is creative and so on, implies the rejection of the authority of the past. But even more importantly, the very fact that experience becomes the touchstone of knowledge means that you no longer have revelation, authority, tradition or even reason. And if experience is the sole touchstone of judgment, you seek to associate with those who have similar experiences—which is why "the generation" has become a social unit, *the* entity of coherence, in so much of

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Western society. The problem of modernity can, then, be posed in this way: What is the norm of conduct? If the norm of conduct is the search for experience, for novel experience, and for more and more novel experience until a point of saturation and utter boredom is reached—then, in the resulting exhaustion, the desire to make some sense of the experience thus amassed leads one inevitably to the past. Questions are raised: Where do I come from? Who am I? And the step from these to a sense of religiosity is only a small one.

WITHOUT WANTING *to personalise this discussion, how would you describe your own preference for a religion or some sense of religiosity? Would you opt for a mythical creed, a redemptive one, or some eclectic construct drawn from a variety of sources? If it is true (as I think it is) that religion is man's "master activity" and that there are many revelations of the truth and many roads to salvation (and you have just said as much, quoting Nietzsche)—does it much matter which religion we want to live by, seeing that they all claim to lead to the heart of the mystery of the universe?*

BELL: No one can stand outside his skin. I grew up as a Jew and I still live as a believing Jew. To that extent, I am predisposed to say that the form of religion closest to my own thinking is a redemptive one on the Judaic model, and I hasten to add that the Judaic conception of redemption is very different from the Christian concept.

The Christian meaning of redemption is the redemption of sin, whereas Jews do not have that sense of sin. Redemption in the Judaic interpretation is the redemption of *obligation*; the redemption of debt to those who nurtured us, institutions which have fostered us, and so on. It is a recognition of our obligation to the community and is clearly expressed in the Jewish concept of "charity" and the ceremonies of traditional Jewish life such as the "buying back" of the first-born. For me personally, therefore, religion is not a matter of preference. It is, rather, a question of the threads of continuity and the cords of community to which I belong.

—Would it be too far-fetched for me to suggest that your forecast of the arrival of a new sense of religiosity and the forms which that religiosity might take are extrapolations from your own faith and experience? That you are, in fact, making a sociological prediction in order to resolve your personal predicament as a man of religion who nevertheless finds himself heir to an intellectual tradition and member of a social environment which, on the whole, negate religion?

BELL: I have to take issue with you again when you say that I "predict" the arrival of a new sense of religion. As an analyst I have to detach myself from the way in which I experience things and see myself as experiencing them. I look at underlying structures which, it seems to me, is what philosophy and social analyses always do and have to do. In disentangling various elements analytically I am trying to see where new tendencies might be arising. In doing so I restrict myself primarily to the discussion of culture because it is there that those who are most perceptive and "embody the spirit of the age" (to use Mill's old phrase) tend to come forward with new answers. Religion is a gauge of society's search for meaning and an indicator of self-reflection. I therefore focus my questioning on people of a religious inclination, and this is, of course, what you also did a little earlier in this conversation when you, quite rightly, took your examples, not from the thinking of the common man in Russia, but from the *Vekhi* group of intellectuals.

To what extent religiosity will become diffused in the rest of society is a very different and difficult question. I am emphatically no cultural determinist—I do not say that what is happening in culture will inevitably spread elsewhere. It may or may not. It may or it may not invoke institutional responses; and if it does, we may find, as we have so often found in history, that in the process of diffusion religion is over-simplified, distorted and in the end rendered grotesque. Where that happens, the practice of religion (or ideology) becomes a mockery of religion, and society may have to bide its time until the hour is ripe for a fresh start to be made.

We are talking about two different things here: *(a)* the role of the analyst who is trying to disentangle what kind of searches exist to find new meanings in human existence; and *(b)* how these meanings may become diffused in society. The latter can only be answered within specific historical situations, and I cannot readily do that because those situations have not yet arisen. All I can do is to look at the harbingers—the swallows and the places where they may one day be able to build their nests. But whether eggs will be laid and birds hatched out in those nests—nobody can foretell.

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Mary Kenny

In the Driver's Seat

On Betty Friedan & Other Women's Libbers

BETWEEN the 1960s and the 1980s the new feminist movement, like other revolutions in the past, tried "turning the world upside down." Looking back, one can say that feminism has established itself as an orthodoxy of today. It has helped to induce legislative reforms in most Western countries, and some changes in social practice in most societies too. In the 1950s in Britain, hardly 20% of married women had jobs outside the home; now more than 50% do so. Equal pay, laws against sex discrimination, the diffusion of birth control throughout the national health system, the legalisation of abortion, the liberalisation of divorce, the removal of old taboos against women in traditional male outposts (the Stock Exchange, the Jockey Club, El Vino's)—all this and much more has been effected, or aided, by the women's liberation movement. Although the movement, rooted as it has been in left-wing politics and ideology, would disown Margaret Thatcher, her achievement of the office of Prime Minister and First Lord of the Treasury is in some part due to changes wrought by it: if they had not prepared the ground, she, perhaps, could not so easily have taken the prize.

There remain, of course, many discontents: arguably, there always will be. There remain areas of failure: dreams of a nation-wide *kibbutz*-type network of crèches and child-care systems have been unrealised. There are aspects of our lives where the women's movement has failed to make any deep impact. Repeated surveys in 1982 showed that, as a broad generality, men have resolutely refused to share housework—or, it might be said (human nature being complex in these matters), women have not wholeheartedly wanted men to divide the home-making role with them. The average wages of women are running at around 59% of the male wage, since equal pay does not provide equal base conditions, and the majority of women still choose to have family responsibilities which put a brake on careerism. And, I would argue, there are areas where the movement has backfired on women and acted against women's interests. But the phenomenon of the present phase of feminism can neither be denied or ignored.

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THE CONTEMPORARY PHASE of the feminist movement had two principal sources in social discontent. One source, which might be called the *radical* element, grew out of the left-wing student movements of the 1960s, in which young women were involved, alongside young men. But, by as early as 1966, women were protesting that the New Left treated women in much the same condescending way as the Old Right. As Anna Coote and Beatrix Campbell recall, in *Sweet Freedom*,[1] their recent retrospective of the women's movement:

> "Radical politics in the 1960s provided an excellent breeding ground for feminism. . . . [But] men led the marches and made the speeches and expected their female comrades to lick envelopes and listen. Women who were participating in the struggles to liberate blacks and Vietnamese began to recognise that they themselves needed liberating—and they needed it now, not 'after the revolution'. . . ."

Interestingly, it was the black leader Stokely Carmichael who (in the right-on phrase of the day) blew the whistle on passive female participation in radical politics—when he was heard to snicker at a SNCC (Student Non-Violent Coordinating Committee) meeting that "the only place for a

[1] *Sweet Freedom: The Struggle for Women's Liberation.* By ANNA COOTE and BEATRIX CAMPBELL. Picador, £1.95.

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woman was 'prone'. . . ." Here was the front-line hero of the radical left, who seemed to favour not simply the tactical political *deferment* of the "ultimate liberation" for women, but their continued subordination.

The second contemporary source of the feminist movement (it has, of course, existed, in both assertive and latent forms, since the 18th century—and more ancient societies had matriarchal systems which we would characterise as "feminist" in form) was in what might be termed the *bourgeois* element. This erupted in its most persuasive manifestation in a journalist's book, published in America in 1962, called *The Feminine Mystique*.[2] Written by Betty Friedan, it was in essence a manifesto of the housewife's discontent with the prosperous post-War world of America and subsequently the West. Although the *radical* element of the movement attracted, in media terms, more publicity and more notice—the "Miss America" pageant in 1968 was the scene for the symbolic bra-burning gesture (girdles and bras were dumped into a trash basket and imaginary flames were ignited)—it was the *bourgeois* element which, throughout the early and middle 1960s, was fuming away beneath with the repeated reprints of Mrs Friedan's book. Betty Friedan spoke deeply to the women living in the affluent society of the late 1950s and '60s.

The book was really quite a simple work (it remains popular and is still reprinting). It did not make outrageous demands or angry statements, although it had some notes of disproportionate complaint (particularly when the author compared the American housewife "jailed" in her suburban home to the inmates of Nazi concentration camps). Parallels with Nazis, one more far-fetched than the other, were indeed to become favoured as a theme; Marilyn French, in *The Women's Room*, went on to compare "all men" with "Nazis." But substantially, the first Friedan book dealt with a down-to-earth situation.

The American housewife of the late 1950s and early '60s had attained a notable standard of education—there was a higher percentage of female college graduates in America than anywhere else in the world. She had an enviable standard of living—a home of her own and two cars were commonplace. Unlike women in Europe, who were still recovering from the debris of the Second World War, she lived in the memory of peace, social tranquillity, and ever-rising expectations; and unlike women almost anywhere else, her kitchen was filled with labour-saving devices and her refrigerator stuffed with food easily purchased at the local supermarket. Effective birth control meant that her children were comfortably spaced—none of the poverty and misery of almost annual child-bearing suffered by poor women in Britain (see pre-War chronicles like *Working-Class Wives*[3]) was visible to Betty Friedan's peers.

Ah, but in the face of all this privilege and plenty, the American housewife was bored, bored, bored. (And boredom, Mary Beard once suggested, was a prime cause in history.)

> "As she made the beds, shopped for groceries, matched slipcover material, lay beside her husband at night, she was afraid to ask even of herself the silent question: 'Is this all?' "

Outside in the big world, her husband ate expense-account lunches; she ate peanut-butter sandwiches with the children. He achieved "job satisfaction" and promotion and travel and stimulation; she ferried the kids to Cubs and Scouts and Brownies, and read articles in the *Ladies' Home Journal* on how to improve her sex life. The articles in question were usually "man-centred"—not surprisingly, since the women's magazines were then generally edited by men, and the sex advice usually added up to new ways of pleasing men by dressing up in a different Baby Doll nightie or making herself ever more feminine with chic cosmetics.

The Feminine Mystique was straight, sound journalism. Betty Friedan listened to what her middle-class contemporaries were saying and wrote it down snappily, sensibly, sympathetically. She also learned from the muck-raking press that there was "a capitalist plot" at work, and she illustrated this with a simple and significant story—the famous story of the cake-mix, worth repeating for the benefit of all the new victims of the old horrific victimisation.

A cake-manufacturer of national repute had devised a cake-mix that was so foolproof that all the housewife needed to do was add water to the mixture and place the concoction in the oven. In twenty minutes a cake would emerge, just like the delicious ones that Grandma used to bake—but without any of the toil and trouble that Grandma had to expend on her home baking. This would not do at all. The cake-manufacturer realised that women would not derive a real sense of achievement from doing something so simple. So he devised a new formula. In the revised version, the woman *first had to beat an egg*, then add the egg to water, and proceed to add that to the cake-mix. This would induce the real sense of housewife's satisfaction. With this example of the cunning of free-market business enterprise, Betty Friedan demonstrated how women were being bamboo-

[2] *The Feminine Mystique*. By BETTY FRIEDAN. Penguin, £1.95.

[3] *Working-Class Wives*. By MARGERY SPRING RICE. Virago, £2.85.

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zled, exploited, de-natured. Instead of getting a chance for excellence and real achievement, they were being provided with a tricksy formula for a phoney cake-mixture.

She had a small point. In 1861, when Isabella Beeton published her great guide to Household Management, a middle-class housewife was a person with a substantial managerial job. Organising a household required planning talents, skills in homecraft, knowledge of cooking, cleaning, dairy work, laundering, pickling, preserving, seasonal knowledge, marketing, and the tactful and humane supervision of servants—quite comparable to what a manager of a small business might do today. Running an American suburban home in 1961 could be done, Betty announced, by a subnormal moron. Hadn't the American woman been educated for better things?

Later, when Betty Friedan's success had elevated her to be the national spokesperson for American women, and her marriage had been dissolved, her estranged husband Carl Friedan said unkindly: "Betty had time to write because she lived in a mansion on the Hudson River, had a full-time maid and was completely supported by me. . . . Betty never washed 100 dishes in 20 years of marriage." Because of her middle-class status, and because she did not allude once to Black, Hispanic, Third World, or otherwise poor women, Betty was never accepted as the Mother of Feminism by the radicals in the movement. But she certainly unleashed—or was the prime agent in unleashing—the frustrations of bourgeois married women like herself. Almost at her bidding, a hundred thousand American Noras stormed out of their dolls' houses to seek true fulfilment, real self-knowledge, and final liberation. Social change was bubbling in American society.

MEANWHILE, the younger radicals, in the late 1960s and early '70s, were well into their fantasies of "making the revolution." Hundreds of books and pamphlets steamed off the presses—in America, leading with Kate Millett's *Sexual Politics* and Shulamith Firestone's *The Dialectic of Sex*; in Britain there were Germaine Greer's *The Female Eunuch*, Eva Figes' *Patriarchal Attitudes*, Sheila Rowbotham's *Women, Resistance and Revolution*, and many, many more. In France, Simone de Beauvoir re-emerged as (in the old phrase of highbrow publicity) "a seminal figure" with re-issues of her classic *The Second Sex*. Women were not so much the flavour of the month as the disc of the decade. Women demanded equality at work and in education, in the boardroom and the trade unions, and above all in the fraught area of sexuality. An American pamphlet called *The Myth of the Vaginal Orgasm*, by Anna Koedt, became almost as important to the women's movement as Engels' *Origin of the Family*. Anna Koedt's tract claimed that heterosexual intercourse was, somehow, devised by men for procreation and was thus inimical to the pleasure of women (primarily in clitoral stimulation). An influential element of the female radicals held that sex with men amounted to an act of sheer betrayal, and that only in lesbianism could women find fulfilment. This, to be sure, was never accepted by the majority of women even in the women's movement; but it said much for the irrepressible boldness of feminism that in those ten years such attitudes were proclaimed, accepted, widely talked about, and even had a certain atmospheric influence.

MY OWN PART in this pageant of social change is unimportant and surely banal; but in some ways, perhaps, it reflects the experience of many women.

I grew up in a conventional suburb of Dublin, not very different from similar suburbs all over the Western world, with conventional attitudes and expectations, except that Ireland, having been more rooted in the old world of 19th-century values, was changing faster and more dramatically than even Britain or America. In the 1950s, Ireland was still culturally Victorian. Divorce was banned (it still is); birth control was outlawed (it is now permitted restrictively); abortion was unheard-of by respectable people; women were theoretically venerated as mothers but held back in law. Women did not sit on juries, were not permitted to be employed by the State if married, enjoyed hardly any fiscal liberty (such as opening a checking account without the counter-signature of a man), and a male relative had to give written permission for any medical procedure (particularly those pertaining to the reproductive system). My mother was widowed young, and it became clear to me that a woman without dynastic power (that is, as the wife or mother of a network of well-connected men) was in an extremely weak economic position.

To any ambitious young woman, it was a recipe for revolution, and I joined the revolution. J. K. Galbraith once said that the definition of a successful revolution is "pushing down a door that's already rotten"; and Ireland was, in any case, historically on the threshold of the modern world. In Northern Ireland the Catholics had, over the decades, either sulkily accepted a system of authority they did not care for, or connived to circumvent it. The revolution of women and the ubiquitous revolution of everyone else—Blacks, Workers, Ulster Catholics—were all one to me in my twenties. We, the underprivileged, whoever we

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were and wherever, all wanted a piece of the action. If that meant throwing out the priests, overthrowing the ruling classes, undermining the men, so be it. You couldn't make an omelette without breaking eggs, as I learned to chant on the demos.

Perhaps the trigger for the whole thing really was "the Pill." It had come on to the British market in 1961, and throughout the 1960s it unchained women—at least in their minds, if not in reality, since women seldom stay on the Pill[4]—from the old idea that doing as they pleased meant "paying the price." It planted in our minds the conviction that *now* was the time to be as free as men. This conviction spread like a hit song, and a main theme—perhaps *the* essential note of the women's movement—was that first and foremost we should have control of our own bodies, and thus of our own wills and our hearts' desires.

I was a founder-member of the Women's Liberation Movement in Dublin in 1970; but soon afterwards I returned to London where I had worked as a journalist in the 1960s. London had been, in my recollection, brilliant and free and, in the hackneyed terminology of the time, "swinging." By the early 1970s, yet another round of change was already setting in: 1973 seemed the high point of the women's movement when so much "equal rights legislation" had been attained—perhaps crowned by the US Supreme Court's ruling in favour of abortion as a woman's choice, which was widely regarded as a very great triumph. It was also the year of the Oil Crisis from which the recession in the Western world is now dated. The women's movement had started, grown, and flourished in the period of expansion and affluence, when there was space for new ideas and open generosity in the job market. What was to become of it in harder, meaner times? and what was to become of the women who had joined it and had, in turn, been changed by it?

TWENTY YEARS AFTER her first book, in 1982, Betty Friedan published a fresh look at the women's movement which she called *The Second Stage*[5]—a very different kind of book in a very different kind of time. The recession was accepted as a depressing fact of life: unemployment and inflation had become grave in every country in the world. Many of the radical movements of the 1960s had taken a bitter turning: the students' rebellions in Western Europe had laid the ground for the terrorism of the Baader-Meinhof gang and the Red Army Fraction. The "flower children" of America had given way to drugs, bombsters, and the fringe horrors of a Charles Manson. The civil rights movement of Northern Ireland had opened the door to the IRA. Among women, nothing as bloodthirsty had happened, but the price of what freedom had been won was often high.

In Britain, divorce had quadrupled over a period of twenty years. Women who once "chose" to seek liberation in work were now obliged to slog it out in the market-place just to keep up with the demands of inflation. (Ironically, the working wife was one of the contributory causes of inflation, as two-income families unwittingly pushed up the price of houses and other commodities to the detriment of single-income families.) Abortion, which had been expected to fade away with better contraception, rose in England and Wales from 49,000 in 1969 (the first year the Abortion Act was fully operative) to 130,000 in 1980. The pattern was similar in the United States, as in most developed countries.

What Betty Friedan saw when she came to *The Second Stage* was not a picture of women who were "underachieved" in their suburban homes, but a picture of women who were stretched to the limit: under stress, competing with their husbands (and ex-husbands) in the employment market, often vying with their teenage children for jobs, reeling from the fatigue of trying to keep home and work together, greatly disadvantaged by the breakdown of the family which the women's movement had helped to engineer. In *The Feminine Mystique*, Betty Friedan had noticed that the married women who had careers were supported by the housewives in their circle (if a child was sick, or there were problems at home, neighbours would help). In *The Second Stage* she noted that there were no housewives left at home to provide any support at all. In place of the bewildered housewife with the fake cake-mix, she found an ailing New York career woman alone in her apartment; her neighbour, also an overstretched Superwoman, was "too busy" to drop by with a carton of milk. (Telling details. Betty was always good at that.)

As for "housework", it also figured in Betty's recantation. Had it only been a series of menial tasks fit for morons; or was it also about caring for the people one loved? Marriage may have been a male plot to keep women in their place, but most women still seemed to want it. The sexual revolution had produced freedom for women; it also produced an increase in rape, violence against women, exploitation, pornography, and an epidemic of herpes. (Shulamith Firestone had claimed that a woman's freedom could only really be achieved when her babies were conceived and developed in laboratories; this was becoming

[4] By April 1968, Public Health Reports in the US were estimating that between 35 and 50% of women stop taking the Pill within the first year of use.

[5] *The Second Stage*. By BETTY FRIEDAN. Michael Joseph, £8.95.

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eerily true with *in vitro* fertilisation and the prospect of foetal development artificially.) Women who had rallied for abortion demonstrations were now, Betty Friedan noted, frantically trying to have babies, often "against the biological clock." And the most distressing phenomenon was that men seemed to have changed scarcely at all.

The Second Stage is an older, sadder, more disillusioned book; it is also less neat, less specific, less certain in its conclusions and prescriptions. What women need now, Betty proclaims vaguely, is the ability to alter men and the right to produce their children joyfully as and when they want to. Evidently nobody has yet mentioned to her that nature does not award rights.

AND SMALL WONDER that men have not changed—the women's movement has done all the changing for them! Feminism has, above all, benefited men. Once, a man might have been expected to stick loyally by the wife he married, or, if he abandoned her, to pay the price in support and responsibility. Liberalised divorce laws have altered that. Once, in the 1950s, there was some gentlemanly idea around that a chap didn't play fast-and-loose with a lady (or, if he wasn't good, he'd be careful). Now, contraception is the responsibility of women, and if a pregnancy takes places it is her right to choose; moreover, if she chooses abortion, in half the cases the taxpayer picks up the bill. Once a man was expected to support his wife and family; now a wife is expected to support herself (and if she should request support when a marriage is dissolved, she will be called an "alimony drone" by other women). At home, men still generally enjoy the traditional comforts of wifely care; at work, they enjoy the added pleasures of more women than ever working with them (although generally in inferior positions). Once, even within my memory, men did not swear in front of women or take undue unfair advantage of them—well, some limits were observed. Now, as the newly documented complaint of widespread sexual harassment has made clear, men at work feel that since women are liberated, all are fair game.

Why has there been no male backlash against the women's movement? But why should there be? The women's movement has been wonderful for men. And although some of its achievements are valid (in education and in the flexibility of social ideas), it has taken Germaine Greer, of all people, to see that there has been impoverishment too. "She feels", Frances Cairncross wrote in *The Guardian*, in an interview with the High Priestess of Women's Liberation.

> "that feminism has minimised the seriousness of abortion and over-dramatised the seriousness of rape.... Of Western women she says: 'None of us has grown up in a true family, where the home is the centre of social and intellectual life, and not just a dormitory for the people who happen to live there.' With the devaluation of the home, women have lost meaning in their own lives. Because the home has lost its meaning, women in the West no longer understand how to work together. 'I watch feminist groups trying not to be competitive and not to have ego trips. And I think of Asian families in Birmingham, how the work of mother and daughters and the old ladies is just so much more graceful.'
>
> She is appalled by the way families in the West treat their children. 'It is because we do not really like children that we no longer have them.' She sees us succumbing to genetic decline, as other civilisations which still want children and still accept the survival of the fittest overtake us.... She wonders whether we will return to chastity in the West. 'In most traditional societies, people believe that if you fuck outside marriage you become sterile. And certainly venereal disease is now one of the main causes of infertility. In the Anglo-Saxon world, about 10% of 16-year-olds will have venereal disease in any given year. Even a short skirmish with gonorrhea can leave a woman with her fallopian tubes permanently blocked....'
>
> She finds all the talk about 'the right to control our bodies' (she pronounces it in a mocking American drawl) rather silly. 'Nobody has the right not to feel pain. We should have been talking about the right to choose our reproductive destiny.' "

THE GODS THAT FAILED, the tubes that failed—these misgivings of Germaine Greer, these wondering feelings about what has been lost, are mirrored very much in my own reflections. When I return to Ireland, I see that the womenfolk in my family are indeed less liberated—in the sense that is now orthodox—than their British or American sisters. But I note that they have other advantages, for which I feel wistful: a warm family life, a whole network of growing children extending to nieces and nephews and cousins around them as they grow older, steadier marriages, calmer lives, a sense of belonging to a community rather than just a constant striving for some vague, selfish, personal fulfilment. I really couldn't give a tinkeress's damn whether I am called to sit on a jury or not—indeed, I see it as merely another burdensome responsibility—and it would not cost me a thought if I were not considered fit to negotiate the insurance on the mortgage. Isn't the warmth of human relationships, which begins with one's

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family and children, turning out to be simply a hundred times more valuable than all these so-called "rights"? "Ah", they cry, "it is all very well for you—you have had the *choice*. If you had lived in a backward society all your life, without being able to try out modern liberation, you would feel differently!..." Perhaps. The trouble about having the choice is that choices turn out to be so irreversible: once the majority of women choose the liberated way, there is no going back to the cosiness of before. The world that once was slips away, and it is slipping everywhere.

Of course, I know the dangers of falling victim to this kind of blend of sentiment, remorse, and nostalgia. Perhaps there never were any "good old days", really. There is ceaseless change in the world, always accompanied by its own price. The motor car brought freedom; it also brought death, a disfigured landscape, mutilation, pollution, isolation. Indeed, in the motor car one can, I think, see the clearest cameo of the women's movement and its consequences.

When I was a child in Ireland, it was practically unknown for a woman to drive an automobile. The man's place was behind the wheel of the motor car, with the woman next to him as a passenger. Any reversal of this order was considered to be unnatural. When women drove cars, the world would be turned upside down, putting women, after the hurly-burly, in the driver's seat of control.

Nowadays, women do drive motor cars—all the time. They drive the children to school, their husbands to the station for the commuter train, their mothers to church, their men back from the station at night. At any nice suburban party these days you can witness the sight of a man drinking freely while the woman stays sober to drive him home. "I'm nothing but the bloody chauffeur", grumbles one working wife of my acquaintance. Women *are* behind the wheel now, but somehow it means not so much an increase in freedom, as just one more wearisome worry, one more weighty responsibility. Perhaps it is significant that at the age of 38 I still refuse to learn to drive the infernal machine. The driver's seat, not unlike being on the locomotive of history, can be a disappointing place.

Soft Focus

Porno girls are lumpfish roe
rather than milk of magnesia.
Parts of them are smoked salmon;
other parts cherry and
knickerbocker glory. They are
white wine in tall glasses.

My wife is drinking chocolate and
digestive biscuits. Only once was she
lobster thermidor. Forget
satin cushions and ostrich feathers;
my wife is cardigans from C & A,
and lots of milk puddings.

I love my wife. I do not
love porno girls—but I do
have a predilection for
fresh cream gâteaux and oysters,
passion fruit and Tequila Sunrises.
Somewhere, I feel, there must be

a fat tycoon, surrounded by naked girls,
goblets of madeira, and silver plate
laden with dark grapes, who longs for
Sheila to knit him a pullover, and pour
a cup of stewed tea
discoloured by too much milk.

Paul Groves

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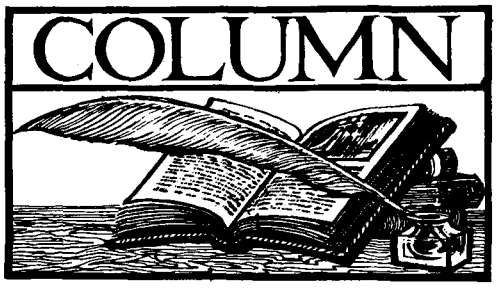

PERIODICALLY, at airports, you may meet the Bilderberg Gang. Not a bevy of hoodlums—although, with their tunic-collared raincoats, snap-brim hats, and slimline suitcases, they often look sinister enough. Tall, commanding men, most of them, they look around keenly for a chauffeur bearing a placard, then stride away behind him to the official limousines. A face here or there may seem familiar, perhaps from the cover of *Time* or *Newsweek*: a Senator, a political professor, a present or former incumbent of the Pentagon, the State Department, the Treasury, Downing Street, or the White House itself.

They're not always Bilderbergers—members of that select group which first met in, and still takes its name from, the Hotel Bilderberg at Oosterbeek in the Netherlands. They may be the Königswinter crew, or a Ditchley Park delegation, or an Aspen assembly of the great and the good. Whatever their label or destination, they're often the same people; and the business they're about will be much the same too. For several days, usually in some subsidised stately home, they'll gather at green-baize tables, with a pad, a pencil, a water-glass, and a microphone at each place, to debate in private the great affairs of the world.

Arthur Koestler once derided their like as *The Call-Girls*, winging in at the drop of a hat or a foundation's summons to supply hand relief or full personal service to any frustrating problem under the sun. Now and then, attending such gatherings, I've been attracted by Koestler's metaphor. There is a certain promiscuity about all-purpose experts with their unfailing blow job of hot air. Some of them undoubtedly enjoy the lavish amenities—brief collective glimpses of a vanished seigniorial life-style. But "good-time girls" would be a fairer tag than "call-girls"; and most but not all of them are men.

What's more, the meetings serve a purpose. In our global village, they're gatherings of the elders and aspiring elders—people who now or later may be exercising power, and who find it immensely helpful to have met already, informally, their foreign opposite numbers. Bilderberg, for example, has brought together at various times such assorted luminaries as Helmut Schmidt, Valéry Giscard d'Estaing, Dean Acheson, and Margaret Thatcher. The future President Carter attended the Trilateral Commission. Bosses and trade-union leaders have hobnobbed in ways and places which might disconcert class warriors. Even ENCOUNTER has been represented at encounters between East and West.

As a participant and sometimes organiser on such occasions, I've often wished that they weren't so evanescent. At the final session, thanks are expressed and hands are shaken; farewell drinks are bought, and notepads tucked away. "Immensely valuable", we assure each other; "a very good discussion . . . made some important points." Back home, we promise ourselves, we'll ponder our notes and exploit them in articles, books, speeches, or position papers. Somehow, no doubt tortuously, a few of those fine ideas must worm their way into public policy. Later, trying to decipher our pencilled scrawl, we wonder if that's all there was to it. Perhaps someone else will rescue and reconstruct the shards of the discussion. That other columnist was there, and that deputy under-secretary—not to mention those senior politicians. Yes, they'd better do it: they have a grasp of the subject; besides, they carry more clout. Treasonably wondering what use it's all been, we fall back on the contacts made over lunch or dinner. Next time we need help, advice, or information, we shall be on first-name terms.

Carrying the treason further, I've occasionally seen such meetings as training runs for resting or out-of-work politicos—plastic-plumed stage troops in mock wars for an Othello whose occupation's gone. There's little in life more traumatic than losing office. No more government car, no more panel of aides, no more red telephones, no more state secrets. So—let's set the world to rights. Recent ex-Ministers carry excessive *gravitas*. These training sessions help them to work it off.

Worst of all is the fear that such loss of office may be permanent—merging imperceptibly into the realisation that. . . . Politicians enjoying unwanted leisure may recall the jingle:

There goes the happy moron:
He doesn't give a damn.
I often wish I were one.
My God! Perhaps I am.

And one of the toughest things for a former statesman to accept is that the party's finally over, when he still has so much to offer his country and perhaps the world.

SI *exemplum requiris, circumspice*. Ex-presidents, ex-prime ministers, ex-chancellors, ex-secretaries of state—they abound in every Western country, many of them mere striplings by the standards

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of Brezhnev's Kremlin or Adenauer's Bonn. Research has shown that intelligent people go on being intelligent longer than the less gifted: the stereotype of the wizened sage remains apt. So there they are with their bright brains, their experience, and their august self-image, kicking their John Lobb heels.

The United States is better than some European countries at using this senior talent pool. Special reports, task forces, presidential commissions—all have recruited, from time to time, revered elder statesmen from across the political divide. Such generosity is harder to imagine in Europe. British Royal Commissions seldom involve, say, former prime ministers, especially from the Opposition. If they're ever invited, they may well decline so laborious and lengthy a chore. Instead, they join the conference circuit, or the Brandt Commission. In either case, given Parliament's elected dictatorship, their impact on policy is probably less than in Washington, all checks and balances and lobbyists and opportunities for nudging the custodians of power.

Theoretically, a Second Chamber should be the home of such veterans' wisdom—a senate in the basic sense of the word. But that doesn't work either. The Lords in Britain include many who lack the requisite qualities, and omit many others ripe for the job. Their remaining powers, moreover, are under attack, as is their very existence. Elsewhere, most second chambers are simulacra of the first. So for the most part, our mature Othellos continue to lack full occupation. "Ageism", like racism and sexism, isn't only unfair: it's also a ludicrous waste.

THESE THOUGHTS are prompted partly by reading some political memoirs and studies of the recent past. Last year, Walt Rostow published the first two in what promises to be a series of "essays centred on the relationship between ideas and action." The first dealt with General Eisenhower's decision of 25 March 1944, to concentrate pre-D-Day bombing on railway marshalling yards and repair facilities; the second, with the Acheson-Clayton proposals for a pan-European settlement after World War II.[1] Now 66, Dr Rostow has been a professor at the University of Texas since 1969, crowning a distinguished career at Columbia, Oxford, Cambridge, MIT, and elsewhere; but his academic insight is sharpened by his experience as an official at the State Department and the White House. His influence there was sometimes debatable: as a "theologian" of foreign aid, he annoyed some colleagues; as an advocate of US involvement in South-east Asia he may have been over-eager. As an historian, he gains immeasurably from his time in office. He can give the genuine feel of indecision, effort, and suspense. "Break the drowsy spell of narrative", wrote J. R. Seeley in *The Expansion of England*; "Ask yourself questions; set yourself problems." Rostow, in these essays, does just that.

What he also does is confirm the amount of hard, constructive thinking that went into both the efforts he describes. Off-the-cuff commentators, and popular peddlers of received ideas, tend either to ignore or to belittle the characteristic processes of American policy-making. Some seem to assume that decisions are taken in the light of trigger-happy rhetoric; others, that a mountain of verbose pedantry gives birth to mouselike dither. To anyone looking deeper, or drawing on experience of Washington, the reality is far more impressive.

The late President Eisenhower used to be mocked for his press conference prose. Read cold, in often imperfect transcript, it looked like the ramblings of a disorganised mind. Properly punctuated, it made better sense; but there remained the suspicion that Ike was an amateur, a simple soldier, who insisted on one-page summaries of policy options, and liked to spend his days on the golf-course. Well, that's all wrong. A new book on the Eisenhower presidency, by an intellectual who initially shared most of these prejudices, proves conclusively that the Ike *persona* was largely a myth.[2] The press conference prose was a deliberate smoke-screen; Eisenhower, even as a soldier, was a consummate politician; far from being lazy, he was a workaholic who read and crisply annotated long official papers; his days on the golf-course were well-publicised to prove that he was healthy when in fact he was ailing, and they were few and far between. My own sole contact with him, in private, showed him to be genial, but sharp as a dagger.

IF EISENHOWER, then, is due for upgrading by unbiased historians, it's surely time to praise earlier if less famous men. Dean Acheson and Will Clayton will do to start with. They emerge from Rostow's essay as a very American blend of idealism and practicality—a verdict borne out by Acheson's two urbane and colourful books of reminiscences. Do we properly appreciate how much of the world we now live in was constructed by such people in the first few years after World

[1] *Pre-Invasion Bombing Strategy: General Eisenhower's Decision of March 25, 1944*. By W. W. ROSTOW, Gower Publishing, £9.50, paper £4.95; $23.50, paper $12.25. *The Division of Europe after World War II: 1946*. By W. W. ROSTOW. Gower Publishing, £10.50, paper £5.95; $22.50, paper $12.50.

[2] *The Hidden-hand Presidency: Eisenhower as Leader*. By FRED I. GREENSTEIN. Basic Books, $16.95.

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War II? The United Nations, the World Bank, the IMF, the GATT, most of the alphabet soup of international institutions by which we're still nourished was brewed in record time. By 1950, even Europe's institutions were in place: the OEEC, precursor of OECD; the Council of Europe; and the first European Community, the ECSC. Not all of them were formed under US pressure. But all enjoyed US encouragement, and the benefit of American vision. Above all, the Atlantic Alliance was a total reversal of pre-War US policy, and a practical, costly embodiment of enlightened self-interest in a dangerous world.

Its weakness, and that of the post-War world's other international institutions, was the disparity between giant America and European countries now dwarfed. The contrast of scale led to continual friction, and still does. Decisions taken in Washington could cause earthquakes in Europe, whether on security, job protection, trade policy, or domestic interest rates. Attempts by individual European governments to make their voices heard sounded peevish or strident. Either way, they were often ineffectual. Mutual irritation was never far from the surface, even at the best of times. Viet Nam, Watergate, and later uncertainties have simply rammed the lesson home. Cooperation is always difficult. It becomes harder still when the would-be partners are unequal.

ONE AMERICAN who learned this lesson, partly from Jean Monnet, was George Ball. He helped teach it to President Kennedy, who adopted as what a journalist called his "Grand Design" a partnership of equals between the United States and a uniting Europe, including Britain. Ball's dogged insistence on this plan, when Britain was still unwilling to join the European Community, made him unpopular in London. "He told too many home truths", confessed one Washington Briton. Ball repeats the story unabashed in his recent lively memoirs:[3] it clearly appeals to his rakish, piratical side. Son of a Devonian father, he shows an exasperated affection for Britain, fond of its language and its poets, cross with its illusions and pretensions, deeply imbued with its human values and ideals. A freebooting lawyer, he pursued a wayward career in and out of American politics, working with the New Deal as a young man, then on Lend-Lease and the Strategic Bombing Survey, later helping post-War reconstruction as an adviser to Jean Monnet and successive interests in France. After working on Adlai Stevenson's two abortive presidential campaigns, he served at the State Department under Presidents Kennedy and Johnson. From the start, he opposed as hopeless America's commitment to the Viet Nam war. Supporting Hubert Humphrey's campaign, he excoriated Richard Nixon, and in private predicted: "His Administration will destroy itself by its own corruption within a few months. The chemistry is unavoidable: corruption mixed with arrogance leads to carelessness, carelessness to exposure, and exposure to disaster. . . ." This, he said later, was not based on advance information, but on instinct. As usual, his instinct was right.

It still is. Some will read his book for its candid portraits—of Stevenson, silver-tongued but "a poet, not an architect"; of Kennedy, impatient for results but cool and moderate over Cuba; of Johnson, with his embarrassing habit of putting an arm round your shoulders and talking inches from your face; of Hubert Humphrey; of Walt Rostow (with whom Ball disagreed severely); of stalwarts like Acheson, Dean Rusk, and McGeorge Bundy. They seem like figures from another age. Several of them are.

But if people pass on, many problems remain the same. And what impresses me most about Ball's book is the hard, cool judgment it brings to bear on central issues that are with us still. He has his peccadilloes: he even misquotes T. S. Eliot, although he takes his title from *The Dry Salvages*. But if he's not quite a poet, he's certainly an architect. The Grand Design is too important to be left to the Bilderberg Gang. We need it now.

M

[3] *The Past Has Another Pattern: Memoirs*. By GEORGE W. BALL. W. W. Norton, $21.95, £13.95.

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Pete Morgan

Out

Out in the furthest corner of the yard
The bed in which my mother's mother died
Is disassembled, tacked against the wall.
It's nothing special, functionally dull
But when no relative would give it room
We took it in to keep it out of harm
As much as sleep in it, though we slept sound
To find some spirit welcoming and kind.

For years we hauled it with us when we moved
From one place hated to another loved,
From one loud room into another's peace.
Its plainness always proved its saving grace
For plainness was its simple settled point—
It went with any colour, any print
Where roses climbed from roses or where white
Grew yellow with the smoke of cigarettes.

We hauled it with us, mile on yawning mile,
To find the doors too narrow, rooms too small
To take such bulk of nineteen-twenties oak.
I took upon myself the sullen ache
Of stacking that dark wood against dark stone
Where damp had seeped and petalled into green—
Out where the air seemed loaded with a salt
That hung as heavy in the head as guilt.

That corner was as far as I could hide
Something that we held and still must hold,
Something we possessed, but best forget.
Yet from the house the brightest window lit
That stark reproving presence at the wall
Where autumn drove its weather to the soul—
Out where the frosty promise of the moon
Drove dull to bright, the dark red wood to bone.

Out there, through crippled winter and a frost
That welded oak to stone with iron fists,
The seasons gripped it, winter through to spring
And through to heady summer when it hung
With spirals in an undulating screen
Of Withywind and blinding Columbine.
Yet in each room above the tossing yard
The rattle of a heavy breath grew loud.

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Roy Fuller

Ancient Sogdia

Ancient Sogdia was repeatedly subjugated:
Its products survive only in damaged form.
The Valley of the Thirteen Tombs—
The Spirit Road—is sparsely populated,
Grass-grown ruins haunted by vanished dynasts,
Glimpsed by the visitor across the valley
Through the shimmering summer air
(While gloomily commenting on the dilapidation
Of the funeral-halls and shrines of the emperors).
In winter Hawfinches and Rosefinches abound in the grass,
In the spring Willow Warblers in the trees.

Most Sogdians held to their own traditional faith
Of "Mazdaism"—a protective screen
To baulk straight-travelling evil spirits
(Linked with the planet Venus).

Quotes the eminent Russian scholar V. A. Livshits:
"The openings of hidden conduits
Were prettily shaped." Long since obliterated.

Douglas Dunn

Reincarnations

The kitten that befriends me at its gate
Purrs, rubs against me, until I say goodbye,
Stroking its coat, and asking "Why? Why? Why?"
For now I know the shame of being late
Too late. She waits for me at home
Tonight, in the house-shadows. And I must mourn
Until Equator crawls to Capricorn
Or murder in the sun melts down
The Arctic and Antarctica. When bees collide
Against my study's window-pane, I let them in.
She nurtures dignity and pride;
She waters my eye. She rustles in my study's palm;
She is the flower on the geranium.
Our little wooden train runs by itself
Along the windowsill, each *puff-puff-puff*
A breath of secret, sacred stuff.
I feel her goodness breathe, my Lady Christ.
Her treasured stories mourn her on their shelf,
In spirit-air, that watchful poltergeist.

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Duties Concerning Islands

Of Rights & Obligations—By MARY MIDGLEY

HAD ROBINSON CRUSOE any duties on his island?

When I was a philosophy student, this used to be a familiar conundrum, which was supposed to pose a very simple question: namely, can you have duties to yourself? Mill, they correctly told us, said no.

> "The term duty to oneself, when it means anything more than prudence, means self-respect or self-development and for none of these is anyone accountable to his fellow-creatures."[1]

Kant, on the other hand, said yes.

> "Duties to ourselves are of primary importance and should have pride of place . . . nothing can be expected of a man who dishonours his own person."[2]

There is a serious disagreement here, not to be sneezed away just by saying—"it depends on what you mean by duty." Much bigger issues are involved. But quite how big has, I think, not yet been fully realised. To grasp this, I suggest that we rewrite a part of Crusoe's story, so as to bring in sight a different range of concerns, thus:

> "*Sept. 19, 1685.* This day I set aside to devastate my island. My pinnace being now ready on the shore, and all things prepared for my departure, Friday's people also expecting me, and the wind blowing fresh away from my little harbour, I had in mind to see how all would burn. So then, setting sparks and powder craftily among certain dry spinneys which I had chosen, I soon had it ablaze, nor was there left, by the next dawn, any green stick among the ruins. . . ."

Now, work on the style how you will, you cannot make that into a convincing paragraph. Crusoe was not the most scrupulous of men, but he would have felt an invincible objection to this senseless destruction. So would the rest of us. Yet the language of our moral tradition has tended strongly, ever since the Enlightenment, to make that objection unstateable. All the terms which express that a claim is serious or binding—duty, right, law, morality, obligation, justice—have been deliberately narrowed in their use so as to apply only within the framework of contract, to describe only relations holding between free and rational agents. Since it has been decided *a priori* that rationality has no degrees and that cetaceans are not rational, it follows that, unless you take either religion or science fiction seriously, we can only have duties to humans, and sane, adult, fully responsible humans at that.

Now the morality we live by certainly does not accept this restriction. In common life we recognise many other duties as serious and binding, though of course not necessarily overriding. If philosophers want to call these something else instead of "duties", they must justify their move. We have here one of these clashes between the language of common morality (which is of course always to some extent confused and inarticulate) and an intellectual scheme which arose in the first place from a part of that morality, but has now taken off on its own and claims authority to correct other parts of its source.

There are always real difficulties here. As ordinary citizens we have to guard against dismissing such intellectual schemes too casually; we have to do justice to the point of them. But as philosophers, we have to resist the opposite temptation of taking the intellectual scheme as decisive, just because it is elegant and satisfying, or because the moral insight which is its starting-point is specially familiar to us. Today, this intellectualist bias is often expressed by calling the insights of common morality mere "intuitions." This is quite misleading, since it gives the impression that they have been reached without thought, and that there is, by contrast, a scientific solution somewhere else to which they ought to bow as there might be if we were contrasting commonsense "intuitions" about the physical world with physics or astronomy. Even when they do not use that word, however, philosophers often manage to give the impression

[1] J. S. Mill, *Essay on Liberty*, Ch. IV (Everyman ed.), p. 135.

[2] Immanuel Kant, "Duties to Oneself", in *Lectures on Ethics* (tr. Infield, 1930), p. 118.

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that whenever our moral views clash with any simple, convenient scheme, it is our *duty* to abandon them. Thus G. R. Grice:

> "It is an inescapable consequence of the thesis presented in these pages that certain classes cannot have natural rights: animals, the human embryo, future generations, lunatics and children under the age of, say, ten. In the case of young children at least, my experience is that this consequence is found hard to accept. But it is a consequence of the theory; it is, I believe, true; and I think we should be willing to accept it. At first sight it seems a harsh conclusion, but it is not nearly so harsh as it appears. . . ."
> (*Grounds of Moral Judgment*, 1967, pp. 146-47)

But it is in fact extremely harsh, since what he is saying is that the treatment of children ought not to be determined by their interests, but by the interests of the surrounding adults capable of contract, which of course can easily conflict with them.

In our own society, he explains, this does not actually make much difference, because parents here are so benevolent that they positively want to benefit their children; and accordingly here "the interests of children are reflected in the interests of their parents." But this, he adds, is just a contingent fact about us. "It is easy to imagine a society where this is not so", where, that is, parents are entirely exploitative. "In this circumstance, the morally correct treatment of children would no doubt be harsher than it is in our society. But the conclusion has to be accepted." Grice demands that we withdraw our objections to harshness, in deference to theoretical consistency. But "harsh" here does not mean just "brisk and bracing" like cold baths and a plain diet. (There might well be more of those where parents do feel bound to consider their children's interests.) It means unjust.

Our objection to unbridled parental selfishness is not a mere matter of tone or taste; it is a moral one. It therefore requires a moral answer, an explanation of the contrary value which the contrary theory expresses. Grice and those who argue like him take the ascetic, disapproving tone of people who have already displayed such a value, and who are met by a slovenly reluctance to rise to it. But they have not displayed that value. The ascetic tone cannot be justified merely by an appeal to consistency. An ethical theory which, when consistently followed through, has iniquitous consequences is a bad theory and must be changed. Certainly we can ask whether these consequences really are iniquitous; but this question must be handled seriously. We cannot directly conclude that the consequences cease to stink the moment they are seen to follow from our theory.

THE THEORETICAL MODEL which has spread blight in this area is, of course, that of social contract, to fit which the whole cluster of essential moral terms which I mentioned—right, duty, justice, and the rest—has been progressively narrowed. This model shows human society as a spread of standard social atoms, originally distinct and independent, each of which combines with others only at its own choice and in its own private interest. This model is drawn from physics, and from 17th-century physics at that, where the ultimate particles of matter were conceived as hard, impenetrable, homogeneous little billiard-balls, with no hooks or internal structure. To see how such atoms could combine at all was very hard. Physics, accordingly, moved on from this notion to one which treats atoms and other particles as complex items, describable mainly in terms of forces, and those the same kind of forces which operate outside them. It has abandoned the notion of ultimate, solitary, independent individuals.

Social contract theory, however, retains it. On this physical—or archaeophysical—model, all significant moral relations between individuals are the symmetrical ones expressed by contract. If, on the other hand, we use a biological or "organic" model, we can talk also of a variety of asymmetrical relations found within a whole. Leaves relate not only to other leaves, but to fruit, twigs, branches, and the whole tree. People appear not only as individuals, but as members of their groups, families, tribes, species, ecosystems and biosphere, and have moral relations, as parts, to these various wholes.

The choice between these two ways of thinking is not, of course, a simple once-for-all affair. Different models are useful for different purposes. We can, however, reasonably point out, first, that the old physical pattern makes all attempts to explain combination extremely difficult. Second, that since human beings actually are living creatures, not crystals or galaxies, it is reasonable to expect that biological ways of thinking will be useful in understanding them.

IN ITS OWN SPHERE, the social contract model has of course been of enormous value. Where we deal with clashes of interest between free and rational agents already in existence, and particularly where we want to disentangle a few of them from some larger group which really does not suit them, it is indispensable. And for certain political purposes during the last three centuries these clashes have been vitally important. An obsession with contractual thinking and a conviction that it is a cure-all are therefore understandable. But the trouble with such obsessions is that they distort

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the whole shape of thought and language in a way which makes them self-perpetuating, and constantly extends their empire. Terms come to be defined in a way which leaves only certain moral views expressible. This can happen without any clear intention on the part of those propagating them, and even contrary to their occasional declarations, simply from mental inertia.

Thus, John Rawls, having devoted most of his long book to his very subtle and exhaustive contractual view of justice, remarks without any special emphasis near the end that,

> "We should recall here the limits of a theory of justice. Not only are many aspects of morality left aside, but no account can be given of right conduct in regard to animals and the rest of nature. (*A Theory of Justice*, p. 512)

He concedes that these are serious matters.

> "Certainly it is wrong to be cruel to animals and the destruction of a whole species can be a great evil. The capacity for feelings of pleasure and pain and for the forms of life of which animals are capable clearly impose duties of compassion and humanity in their case."

All this is important, he says, and it calls for a wider metaphysical enquiry, but it is not his subject. Earlier in the same passage he touches on the question of permanently irrational human beings, and remarks that it "may present a difficulty. I cannot examine this problem here, but I assume that the account of equality would not be materially affected."

Won't it though? It is a strange project to examine a single virtue—justice—without at least sketching in one's view of the vast background of general morality which determines its shape and meaning, including, of course, such awkward and non-contractual virtues as "compassion and humanity." It isolates the duties which people owe each other *merely as thinkers* from those deeper and more general ones which they owe each other as beings who feel. It cannot, therefore, fail both to split man's nature and to isolate him from the rest of the creation to which he belongs. Such an account may not be *Hamlet* without the prince, but it is *Hamlet* with half the cast missing, and without the state of Denmark. More exactly, it is like a history of Poland which regards Russia, Germany, Europe, and the Roman Church as not part of its subject.

I am not attacking John Rawls' account on its own ground. I am simply pointing out what the history of ethics shows all too clearly—how much our thinking is shaped by what our sages *omit* to mention. The Greek philosophers never really raised the problem of slavery till towards the end of their epoch, and then few of them did so with conviction. This happened even though it lay right in the path of their enquiries into political justice and the value of the individual soul. Christianity did raise that problem, because its social background was different, and because the world was in the Christian era already in turmoil, so that men were not presented with the narcotic of happy stability. But Christianity itself did not, until quite recently, raise the problem of the morality of punishment, and particularly of eternal punishment.

This failure to raise central questions was not in either case complete. One can find very intelligent and penetrating criticisms of slavery occurring from time to time in Greek writings—even in Aristotle's defence of that institution.[3] But they are mostly like Rawls's remark here. They conclude "this should be investigated some day." The same thing happens with Christian writings concerning punishment, except that the consideration "this is a great mystery" acts as an even more powerful paralytic to thought. Not much more powerful, however. Natural inertia, when it coincides with vested interest or the illusion of vested interest, is as strong as gravitation.

IT IS IMPORTANT THAT Rawls does not (like Grice) demand that we toe a line which would make certain important moral views impossible. Like Hume, who similarly excluded animals from justice, he simply leaves them out of his discussion. This move ought in principle to be harmless. But when it is combined with an intense concentration of discussion on contractual justice, and a corresponding neglect of compassion and humanity, it inevitably suggests that the excluded problems are relatively unimportant.

This suggestion is still more strongly conveyed by rulings which exclude the non-human world from rights, duties, and morality. Words like *rights* and *duties* are awkward because they do indeed have narrow senses approximating to the legal, but they also have much wider ones in which they cover the whole moral sphere. To say "They do not have rights" or "You do not have duties to them" conveys to any ordinary hearer a very simple message, namely, "They do not matter. . . ." This is an absolution, a removal of blame for ill-treatment of "them", whoever they may be.

To see how strong this informal, moral usage of "rights" is, we need only look at the history of that powerful notion, "the Rights of Man." These rights were not supposed to be ones conferred by law, since the whole point of appealing to them

[3] Aristotle, *Politics* I, 3-8, cf. *Nicomachean Ethics* VII, 11.

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was to change laws so as to embody them. They were vague, but vast. They did not arise, as rights are often said to do, only within a community, since they were taken to apply in principle everywhere. The immense, and on the whole coherent, use which has been made of this idea by reforming movements shows plainly that the tension between the formal and the informal idea of *right* is part of the word's meaning, a fruitful connection of thought, not just a mistake. It is therefore hard to adopt effectively the compromise which some philosophers now favour, of saying that it is indeed wrong to treat animals in certain ways, but that we have no duties to them or that they have no rights.[4] "Animal rights" may be hard to formulate, as indeed are the rights of man. But "no rights" will not do.[5] The word may need to be dropped entirely.

THE COMPROMISE is still harder with the word *duty*, which is rather more informal, and is more closely wedded to a private rather than political use. Where the realm of right and duty stops, there, to ordinary thinking, begins the realm of the optional. What is not a duty may be a matter of taste, style or feeling, of aesthetic sensibility, of habit and nostalgia, of etiquette and local custom; but it cannot be something which demands our attention whether we like it or not. When claims get into this area, they can scarcely be taken seriously.

This becomes clear when Kant tries to straddle the border. He says that we have no direct duties to animals, because they are not rational, but that we should treat them properly all the same because of "indirect duties" which are really duties to our own humanity.[6] This means that ill-treating them might lead us to ill-treat humans, and is also a sign of a bad or inhumane disposition. The whole issue thus becomes a contingent one of spiritual style or training, like contemplative exercises, intellectual practice, or indeed refined manners.[7] Some might need practice of this kind to make them kind to people; others might not and indeed might get on better without it. (Working off one's ill-temper on animals might make one treat people *better*.) But the question of cruelty to animals cannot be like this, because it is of the essence of such training exercises that they are internal. Anything that affects some other being is not just practice, it is real action. Anyone who refrained from cruelty *merely* from a wish not to sully his own character, without any direct consideration for the possible victims, would be frivolous and narcissistic.

A SIMILAR TRIVIALISATION follows where theorists admit duties of compassion and humanity to noncontractors, but deny duties of justice. Hume and Rawls, in making this move, do not explicitly subordinate these other duties, or say that they are less binding. But because they make the contract element so central to morality, this effect seems to follow. The priority of justice is expressed in such everyday proverbs as "Be just before you're generous." We are therefore rather easily persuaded to think that compassion, humanity, and so forth are perhaps emotional luxuries, to be indulged only after all debts are paid.

A moment's thought will show that this is wrong. Someone who receives simultaneously a request to pay a debt and another to comfort somebody bereaved or on their death-bed is not, as a matter of course, under obligation to pay the debt first. He has to look at circumstances on both sides; but in general we should probably expect the other duties to have priority. This is still more true if, on his way to pay the debt, he encounters a stranger in real straits, drowning or lying injured in the road. To give the debt priority, we probably need to think of his creditor as also being in serious trouble—which brings compassion and humanity in on both sides of the case.

WHAT MAKES IT SO HARD to give justice a different clientèle from the other virtues—as Hume and Rawls do—is simply the fact that justice is such a pervading virtue. In general, all serious cases of cruelty, meanness, inhumanity, and the like are also cases of injustice. If we are told that a certain set of these cases does not involve injustice, our natural thought is that these cases must be *trivial*. Officially, Hume's and Rawls's restriction is not supposed to mean this. What, however, is it supposed to mean? It is forty years since I first read David Hume's text, and I find his thought as obscure now as I did then. I well remember double-taking then, and going back over the paragraph for a point which I took it I must have missed. Can anyone see it?

> "Were there [Hume says] a species of creature intermingled with men, which, though rational, were possessed of such inferior strength, both of body and mind, that they were incapable of all resistance, and could never, upon the highest provocation, make us feel the effects of their

[4] E.g. John Passmore, *Man's Responsibility for Nature* (1974), pp. 116-117; H. J. McCloskey, "Rights", *Philosophical Quarterly* (No. 15), 1965.

[5] Nor will it help for philosophers to say "it is not the case that they have rights." Such pompous locutions have either no meaning at all, or the obvious one.

[6] Kant, "Duties towards Animals and Spirits", *Lectures on Ethics*, p. 240.

[7] A point well discussed by Stephen Clark, *The Moral Status of Animals* (1977), pp. 12-13.

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> resentment; the necessary consequence, I think, is that we should be bound by the laws of humanity to give gentle usage to these creatures, but should not, properly speaking, lie under any restraint of justice with regard to them, nor could they possess any right or property, exclusive of such arbitrary lords. Our intercourse with them could not be called society, which supposes a degree of equality, but absolute command on one side and servile obedience on the other. This is plainly the situation of men with regard to animals." (*Enquiry Concerning the Principles of Morals*, para 152)

I still think that the word justice, so defined, has lost its normal meaning. In ordinary life we think that duties of justice become *more* pressing, not less so, when we are dealing with the weak and inarticulate, who cannot argue back. It is the boundaries of prudence which depend on power, not those of justice.

Historically, Hume's position becomes more understandable when one sees its place in the development of social-contract thinking. The doubtful credit for confining justice to the human species seems to belong to Grotius, who finally managed to ditch the Roman notion of *ius naturale*, natural right or law common to all species. I cannot here discuss his remarkably unimpressive arguments for this.[8] The point I want to make here is simply the effect of these restrictive definitions of terms like justice on people's view of the sheer size of the problems raised by what falls outside them.

WRITERS who treat morality as primarily contractual tend to discuss non-contractual cases briefly, casually, and parenthetically, as though they were rather rare. (Rawls's comments on the problem of mental defectives are entirely typical here.) We have succeeded, they say, in laying most of the carpet; why are you making this fuss about those little wrinkles behind the sofa?

This treatment confirms a view, already suggested by certain aspects of contemporary politics in the United States, that those who fail to clock in as normal rational agents and make their contracts are just occasional exceptions, constituting one more "minority" group—worrying no doubt to the scrupulous, but not a central concern of any society. Let us, then, glance briefly at their scope, by roughly listing some cases which seem to involve us in non-contractual duties. (The order is purely provisional and the numbers are added just for convenience.)

Human Sector
1. The dead
2. Posterity
3. Children
4. The senile
5. The temporarily insane
6. The permanently insane
7. Defectives, ranging down to "human vegetables"
8. Human embryos

Animal Sector
9. Sentient animals
10. Non-sentient animals

Inanimate Sector
11. Plants of all kinds
12. Artefacts, including works of art
13. Inanimate but structured objects—crystals, rivers, rocks etc.

Comprehensive
14. Unchosen human groups of all kinds, including families, villages, cities and the species
15. Unchosen multi-species groups, such as ecosystems, forests, and countries
16. The biosphere

Miscellaneous
17. Arts and sciences
18. Oneself
19. God

No doubt I have missed a few, but that will do to go on with.

The point is this. If we look only at a few of these groupings, and without giving them full attention, it is easy to think that we can include one or two as honorary contracting members, by a slight stretch of our conceptual scheme, and find arguments for excluding the others from serious concern entirely. But if we keep our eye on the size of the range, this stops being plausible.

As far as sheer numbers go, this is no minority of the beings with whom we have to deal. We are a small minority of them. As far as importance goes, it is certainly possible to argue that some of these sorts of being should concern us more and others less; we need a priority system. But to build it, *moral* arguments are required. The various kinds of claims have to be understood and compared, not written off in advance. We cannot rule that those who, in our own and other cultures, suppose that there is a direct objection to injuring or destroying some of them, are always just confused, and mean only, in fact, that this item will be needed for rational human consumption.

THE BLANK ANTITHESIS which Kant made between rational persons (having value) and mere things (having none) cannot serve us to map out this vast

[8] For details see John Rodman, "Animal Justice; The Counter-Revolution in Natural Right and Law", *Inquiry* (Vol. 22, nos. 1-2), Summer 1979.

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continuum. And the idea that, starting at some given point on this list, we have a general licence for destruction, is itself a moral view which would have to be justified.

Our culture differs from most others in the breadth of destructive licence which it does allow itself, and from the 17th century onwards, that licence has been greatly extended. Scruples about rapine have been continually dismissed as irrational, but it is not always clear what the rational principles are supposed to be with which they conflict. Western destructiveness has not in fact developed in response to a new set of disinterested intellectual principles, demonstrating the need for more people and less redwoods, but mainly as a by-product of greed and increasing commercial confidence.

Humanistic hostility to superstition has certainly played some part in the process, because respect for the non-human items on our list is often taken to be religious. But it does not have to be. Many scientists who are card-carrying atheists can still see the point of preserving the biosphere. So can the rest of us, religious or otherwise. It is the whole of which we are parts, and its other parts concern us for that reason.

But the language of rights is rather ill-suited for expressing this, because it has been developed mainly for the protection of people who, though oppressed, are in principle articulate. This makes it quite reasonable for theorists to say that rights belong only to those who understand them and can claim them. When confronted with the Human Sector of our list, these theorists can either dig themselves in like Grice and exclude the lot, or stretch the scheme like Rawls, by including the hypothetical rational choices which these honorary members *would* make if they were not unfortunately prevented.

Since many of these people seem less rational than many animals, zoophiles like Peter Singer have then a good case for calling this second device arbitrary and specious, and extending rights to the border of sentience.[9] Here, however, the meaning of the term does become thin, and when we reach the inanimate area, usage will scarcely cover it.[10] There may be a point in campaigning to extend usage. But to me it seems wiser on the whole not to waste energy on this verbal point, but instead to insist on the immense variety of kinds of being with which we have to deal. Once we grasp this, we ought not to be surprised that we are involved in many different kinds of claim or duty. The dictum that "rights and duties are correlative" is quite misleading, because the two words keep different company, and one may be narrowed without affecting the other.

WHAT, THEN, about duties? I believe that this term can properly be used over the whole range. We have quite simply got many kinds of duties, including those to animals, to plants, and to the biosphere. But to speak in this way we must free the term once and for all from its restrictive contractual use, or irrelevant doubts will still haunt us. If we cannot do this, we shall have to exclude the word *duty*, along with *right* (as a noun) from all detailed discussion, using wider words like *wrong*, *right* (adjectival), and *ought* instead. This gymnastic would be possible but inconvenient.

The issue about duty becomes clear as soon as we look at the controversy from which I started, between Kant's and Mill's views on duties to oneself. What do we think about this? Are there duties of integrity, autonomy, self-knowledge, self-respect? It seems that there are.

Mill was right, of course, to point out that they are not duties *to* someone in the ordinary sense. The divided self is a metaphor. It is as natural and necessary a metaphor here as it is over, say, self-deception or self-control; but it certainly is not literal truth. The form of the requirement is different. Rights, for instance, certainly do not seem to come in here as they often would with duties to other persons; we shall scarcely say, "I have a right to my own repsect." And the *kind* of things which we can owe ourselves are distinctive. It is not just chance who they are owed to. You cannot owe it to somebody else, as you can to yourself, to force him to act freely or with integrity. He owes that to himself; the rest of us can only remove outside difficulties.

As Kant justly said, our business is to promote our own perfection and the happiness of others; the perfection of others is an aim which belongs to them.[11] *Respect* indeed we owe both to ourselves and to others, but Kant may well be right to say that *self-respect* is really a different and deeper requirement, something without which all outward duties would become meaningless. (This may explain the paralysing effect of depression.)

Duties to oneself, in fact, are duties with a different *form*. They are far less close than outward duties to the literal model of debt, especially money debt. Money is a thing which can be owed

[9] A case first made by Jeremy Bentham, *Introduction to the Principles of Morals and Legislation*, Ch. 17, and ably worked out by Peter Singer in *Animal Liberation* (1976), Chs. 1, 5 and 6.

[10] It is worth noticing that long before this, when dealing merely with "the Rights of Man", the term often seems obscure, because to list and specify these rights is so much harder than to shout for them. The phrase is probably more useful as a slogan, indicating a general direction, than as a detailed conceptual tool.

[11] Kant, "Preface to the Metaphysical Elements of Ethics", *Introduction to Ethics*, Chs. 4 and 5.

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in principle to anybody; it is the same whoever you owe it to; and if by chance you come to owe it to yourself, the debt vanishes. Not many of our duties are really of this impersonal kind; the attempt to commute other sorts of duty into money is a notorious form of evasion. Utilitarianism, however, wants to make all duties as homogeneous as possible, and that is the point of Mill's position. He views all our self-concerning motives as parts of the desire for happiness. Therefore he places all duty, indeed, all morality, in the outside world, as socially required restriction of that desire—an expression, that is, of other people's desire for happiness.

> "We do not call anything wrong, unless we mean that a person ought to be punished in some way or another for doing it; if not by law, by the opinion of his fellow-creatures; if not by opinion, by the reproaches of his own conscience. This seems the real turning-point of the distinction between morality and simple expediency. It is a part of the notion of Duty in every one of its forms, that a person may rightly be compelled to fulfil it. Duty is a thing which may be *exacted* from a person, as one exacts a debt."[12]

But to make the notion of wrongness depend on punishment and public opinion in this way instead of the other way round is wild.

Mill never minded falling flat on his face from time to time in trying out a new notion for the public good. He did it for us here—and we should, I think, take proper advantage of his generosity, and accept the impossiblity which he demonstrates. The concepts cannot be connected up this way round. Unless you think of certain facts as wrong, it makes no sense to talk of punishment. "Punishing" alcoholics with aversion therapy, or experimental rats with electric shocks, is not really punishing at all; it is just deterrence. This "punishment" will not make their previous actions wrong, nor has it anything to do with morality. The real point of morality returns into Mill's scheme in the Trojan horse of "the reproaches of his own conscience." Why do *they* matter? Unless the conscience is talking sense—that is, on Utilitarian principles, unless it is delivering the judgment of society—it should surely be silenced? Mill, himself a man of enormous integrity and deeply concerned about autonomy, would never have agreed to silence it. But unless we do so, we shall have to complicate his scheme.

IT MAY WELL BE TRUE that, in the last resort and at the deepest level, conscience and the desire for happiness converge. We do want to be honest. But in ordinary life and at the everyday level they can diverge amazingly. We do not want to be put out. What we know we ought to do is often most unwelcome to us, which is why we call it *duty*. And whole sections of that duty do not concern other people directly at all.

A good example is the situation in *Brave New World* where a few dissident citizens have grasped the possibility of a fuller and freer life. Nobody else wants this. Happiness is already assured. If there is a duty of change here, it must be first of all that of each to himself. True, they may feel bound also to help others to change, but hardly in a way which those others would *exact*. In fact, we may do better here by dropping the awkward second party altogether and saying that they all have a duty *of* living differently—one which will affect both themselves and others, but which does not require, as a debt does, a named person or people *to* whom it must be paid. Wider models like "the whole duty of man" may be more relevant.

THIS ONE EXAMPLE from my list will, I hope, be enough to explain the point. I cannot go through all of them, nor ought it to be necessary. Duties need not be quasi-contractual relations holding between symmetrical pairs of rational human agents. There are all kind of other obligations holding between asymmetrical pairs, or involving, as in this case, no outside beings at all.

To speak of duties *to* things in the inanimate and comprehensive sectors of my list is not necessarily to personify them superstitiously, or to indulge in chatter about "the secret life of plants."[13] It expresses merely that there are suitable and unsuitable ways of behaving in given situations. People have duties *as* farmers, parents, consumers, forest-dwellers, colonists, species-members, ship-wrecked mariners, tourists, potential ancestors and actual descendants, etc. As such, it is the business of each not to forget his transitory and dependent position, the rich gifts which he has received, and the tiny part he plays in a vast, irreplaceable and fragile whole.

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[12] J. S. Mill, *Utilitarianism* (Everyman ed.), Ch. 5, p. 45.

[13] The book so titled, by Peter Tompkins and Christopher Bird (1973), claimed to show, by various experiments involving electrical apparatus, that plants can feel. Attempts to duplicate their experiments have, however, totally failed to produce any similar results. See A. W. Galson and C. L. Slayman, "The Not So Secret Life of Plants", *American Scientist* (No. 67 p. 337). It seems possible that the original results were due to a fault in the electrical apparatus.

The attempt shows, I think, one of the confusions which continually arise from insisting that all duties must be of the same form. We do not need to prove that plants are animals in order to have reason to spare them. This point is discussed by Marian Dawkins in her book *Animal Suffering* (Chapman and Hall, 1981), pp. 117-119.

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It is remarkable that we nowadays have to state this obvious truth as if it were new, and invent words like "ecological" to describe a whole vast class of duties. Most peoples are used to the idea. In stating it, and getting it back into the centre of our moral stage, we meet various difficulties, of which the most insidious is possibly the temptation to feed this issue as fuel to long-standing controversies about religion. Is concern for the non-human aspects of our biosphere necessarily superstitious and therefore to be resisted tooth-and-nail?

I have pointed out that it need not be religious at all. Certified rejectors of all known religions can share it. No doubt there is a wider sense in which any deep and impersonal concern can be called religious—one in which Marxism also is a religion. No doubt too all such deep concerns have their dangers, but certainly the complete absence of them has worse ones. Moreover, anyone wishing above all to avoid the religious dimension should consider that the intense individualism which has focused our attention exclusively on the social-contract model is itself thoroughly mystical. It has glorified the individual human soul as an object having infinite and transcendent value, has hailed it as the only real creator, and has bestowed on it much of the panoply of God.

Nietzsche, who was responsible for much of this new theology,[14] took over from the old Thomistic theology which he plundered the assumption that all the rest of creation mattered only as a frame for man. This is not an impression which any disinterested observer would get from looking round at it, nor do we need it in order to take our destiny sufficiently seriously.

ROBINSON CRUSOE then, I conclude, did have duties concerning his island, and with the caution just given we can reasonably call them duties *to* it.

They were not very exacting, and were mostly negative. They differed, of course, from those which a long-standing inhabitant of a country has. Here the language of *fatherland* and *motherland*, which is so widely employed, indicates rightly a duty of care and responsibility which can go very deep, and which long-settled people commonly do feel strongly. To insist that it is really only a duty to the exploiting human beings is not consistent with the emphasis often given to reverence for the actual trees, mountains, lakes, rivers, and the like which are found there. A decision to inhibit all this rich area of human love is a special manoeuvre for which reasons would need to be given, not a dispassionate analysis of existing duties and feelings.

What happens, however, when you are shipwrecked on an entirely strange island? As the history of colonisation shows, there is a tendency for people so placed to drop any reverence and become more exploitative. But it is not irresistible. Raiders who settle down can quite soon begin to feel at home, as the Vikings did in East Anglia, and can after a while become as possessive, proud, and protective towards their new land as old inhabitants. Crusoe from time to time shows this pride rather touchingly, and it would, I think, certainly have inhibited any moderate temptation such as that which I mentioned to have a good bonfire. What keeps him sane through his stay, however, is in fact his duty to God. If that had been absent, I should rather suppose that sanity would depend on a stronger and more positive attachment to the island itself and its creatures.

It is interesting, however, that Crusoe's story played its part in developing that same unrealistic, icy individualism which has gone so far towards making both sorts of attachment seem corrupt or impossible. Rousseau delighted in Defoe's *Robinson Crusoe*, and praised it as the only book fit to be given to a child, *not* because it showed a man in his true relation to animal and vegetable life, but because it was the bible of individualism.

> "The surest way to raise him [the child] above prejudice and to base his judgments on the true relations of things, is to put him in the place of a solitary man, and to judge all things as they would be judged by such a man in relation to their own utility. . . . So long as only bodily needs are recognised, man is self-sufficing . . . the child knows no other happiness but food and freedom!"
>
> (*Emile*, Everyman ed, pp. 147-8)

That false atomic notion of human psychology—a prejudice above which nobody ever raised Rousseau—is the flaw in all social-contract thinking. If he were right, every member of the human race would need a separate island, and heaven knows what our ecological problems would be then.

Perhaps, after all, we had better count our blessings.

[14] See particularly *Thus Spake Zarathustra*, part 3, "Of Old and New Tables," and *The Joyful Wisdom* (otherwise called *The Gay Science*), p. 125 (the Madman's Speech). I have discussed this rather mysterious appointment of man to succeed God in a paper called "Creation and Originality", published in a volume of my essays called *Heart & Mind: The Varieties of Moral Experience* (Harvester Press, 1981).

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THEATRE

The Real Stoppard

By Roger Scruton

ONE OF THE WORST THINGS that ever happened to civilisation was the invention of art. It is not certain when the disaster occurred. Some date it as far back as the 18th century, when the infinitely tedious idea of the sublime stirred in the minds of ordinary decent folk the suspicion that they were missing something. Others argue that Schiller and Hegel were the culprits, the first for arguing that aesthetic education is a necessary preparation for civil life, the second for describing art as though it were almost as important as Hegel's philosophy.

But these are speculations. What is certain is that throughout the 19th century German intellectuals snapped at us, with the idea of art. Although we English put up a stout resistance, we Pod-snapped back in vain. By the end of the 19th century Art definitely existed, as a single, all-engrossing, European ambition, an exclusive club to which everyone, from prince to peasant, from priest to politician, aspired. When King Ludwig II of Bavaria abased himself before Richard Wagner, he was giving public expression to the prevailing social order, by propitiating its sovereign god. And when Hanslick, horrified by Wagner's influence, defended the ideal of the "absolute art" of music, he was simply reiterating the mystic's outrage, upon seeing his god made finite and believable in the graven images of the multitude. But all art corrupts, and absolute art corrupts absolutely. Absolute art rotted the people's conscience. Within a few decades it had virtually abolished life. It became the received idea that art should have no subject besides itself; nothing else was pure or significant enough to merit its attention. Nothing else could bear the infinite burden of meaning which is the right and the duty of divinities. Like Aristotle's God, art must remain above and beyond the world, timelessly thinking itself.

For a while the fraud worked miracles. Art poured its scornful brightness on the world, creating shadows in all the places where civilisation had placed its light. Under the glare of art, the ramshackle endeavours of ordinary humanity seemed obscure and unintelligible. Traditions and moralities, constitutions and laws—all were eclipsed by it. In the shadows, however, the *schwarz*-Alberich of revolution gradually came into being. Places of power fell one by one to its control, and when the people began to perceive at last the emptiness of Art's promise, it was too late to return to the life which they had abandoned. Modern people live as they can, and wander where they may, in a world where the two great illusions of Art and Revolution compete for every meaning. The gods are no longer trusted; but they have effectively cleared the world of rival myths. This is why true humanitarians are accused of being revolutionaries, and true conservatives of being aesthetes. Nobody can quite believe, any more, that there could be a principled pursuit of a civil order which defers to neither ruling illusion.

THAT SELF-REFERENTIAL ART and self-indulgent revolution grow from the same soil is a proposition with which Tom Stoppard is familiar, and there are few modern playwrights who could bring a more formidable intelligence to bear on it. Stoppard's own plays—which are, almost all of them, plays within plays—grow from the demand that Art should be its own subject. At the same time politics provides their occasion, and no politics fascinates Stoppard more than that which has issued from the revolutionary consciousness.

In *Travesties* (1975), he exploited the accidental, or not-so-accidental, coincidence in Zurich of Tristan Tzara (the arch proponent of the Absolute in Art) and Lenin (the arch political absolutist). With them also is James Joyce, and much of the play—a clever collage made from Oscar Wilde's *Earnest*, the Ithaca chapter in *Ulysses*, Lenin's

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letters and speeches, and Tzara's boyish nonsense—is devoted to the contrast between Dada and *Ulysses*. There is no doubt whose side Stoppard is on. Joyce's novel, like Tzara's badinage, is supremely conscious of its artistry; but it also justifies every word by a vision of reality, whereas Dada is nothing more than self-advertisement. "If there is any meaning in any of it, it is in what survives as art", says Joyce, who demolishes the talentless self-reference of Dada, but will not deny that it is art, and not life, which is the purveyor of value. But Joyce poses a question: does art have reality because life is its raw material, or does life gain reality from the meanings contained in art? What, in short, is the real thing? Lenin, who stands apart from the other characters, sifting his benighted pedantries, shows the relentlessness of the shadow world. Yet it is not a real world. Lenin's words are dead, unfeeling, a patter of urgencies which occasionally rattles across the stage. Revolution can be translated into slogans, but not into art. Hence, if all meanings must be borrowed from art, revolution remains unmeaning, a seething pool of darkness, always advancing, always betraying, but never real.

BUT WHEN REVOLUTION has cleared the world of its old significance, something still remains. In the artless desert of the totalitarian state a germ of reality struggles to exist, and to be born again. This struggle for existence provides the theme of Stoppard's most unconventional creation, a play for orchestra (*Every Good Boy Deserves Favour*, 1978), and also that of his most conventional, the effective television drama called *Professional Foul* (1977). In this second play Stoppard shows just what is at stake in the call for "human rights" that was epitomised in the Czech "*Charter 77*." In a cleverly contrived "lecture within a play" he argues that it does not matter if there are no natural rights. The point is rather that all social relations, and all morality, are founded in individual encounters. There cannot be society without the experience of self; and from that experience grows the inescapable sense of a sphere of inviolability. To deny rights is to deny the individual's sense of himself as a member of society, and so to deny society. The totalitarian denial of the self is therefore also a self-denial. In being everywhere, the totalitarian state ceases to be anywhere. Its massive power is, as the Czechs like to point out, also a banalisation of power, an invasion of all experience, all society, and all power, by a sense of pointlessness. The vast machinery of the revolutionary state proves itself unreal.

So there is something, after all, which provides the criterion against which meanings may be measured—a criterion outside art, and outside, or inside, politics. But how can we summon up this "individual existence", or *svébytnost*, which can be understood only as a remainder? Before the invention of Art, novelists, playwrights and poets were able unselfconsciously to provide the social context and moral security with which to describe and to justify the individual self. Outside society, however, the self is nothing, a substance without attributes, matter without form. When society renews itself, then the individual also is renewed. But when society decays, the individual retreats into inscrutable subjectivity. How, then, can we guarantee his reality, and how obtain from him the significance which we desire?

HERE WE SEE the great puzzle that confronts modern art. Art can be the fount of reality only if it can also guarantee the reality of the individual, whose experience contains the clue to what is real. But the individual lies outside art, and outside the laws of art, hiding behind every mask, every persona, that art provides for him. The individual can be crushed, but not commanded.

To return to the allegory—his is the free spirit for which the *licht*-Alberich craves. In one sense he is made by his god; in another sense he makes him, since without him no god can endure. Hence the Wotan-like mastery of Joyce—who created in Bloom the free individual outside art, who would also be art's guarantee. *Ulysses* presents the type of modern creativity. Art must derive its subject from itself, but art must also conceal art, so that we can take its subject for real. The *schwarz*-Alberich of revolution also needs the individual, because revolution needs the meaning which the individual alone controls. However it cannot create the individual, but must appropriate, enslave, and abolish him. The *licht*-Alberich of art creates the individual, but gives us no guarantee of his reality. Art scorns society, and so denies the conditions from which the individual grows. The magic of Joyce lies in his massive, all-embracing tolerance towards our social nature, and in the illusionism which convinces us that he has resurrected the common man.

In what is perhaps his most brilliant play, Stoppard expresses his intense dissatisfaction with the self-involvement of modern art. *Artist Descending a Staircase* (1972), written for radio, shows two ageing painters, Martello and Beauchamp, who were young in the era of Duchamp (from whom the title is adapted). They are quarrelling over the death of their companion, Donner, also an artist, who fell (or was pushed) to his death, containing within himself the unsolved riddle of their existence. It transpires that the dead man alone had felt true love, towards Sophie, the blind mistress of

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Beauchamp. At his death Donner was working on a realistic portrait of Sophie, who herself had died, perhaps by suicide, and in any event by defenestration, on being rejected by Beauchamp. Donner's return to artistic realism comes at the end of a life of aesthetic experiment. As Donner says, "I very much enjoyed my years in that child's garden of easy victories known as the avant-garde, but I am now engaged in the infinitely more difficult task of painting what the eye sees. . . ." But of course, the eye no longer sees it: so where lies the reality of the portrait? Only in Donner's love for Sophie, who rejected him, and who therefore refuted his love. Or did she? She loved only the artist whom she saw, before her eyes failed, beside an abstract painting at the trio's first exuberant exhibition. But had she perhaps confused Beauchamp's abstract with Donner's? With failing sight, how is it possible to distinguish between paintings, each of which abstracts towards the same point of insignificance? So had she in fact loved Donner thinking him to be Beauchamp, or rather, Beauchamp, thinking him to be Donner? What would it be, in any case, to love the individual, rather than his qualities, and what can art show that is more than quality? In a dizzying concentration of philosophical jokes, Stoppard points both to the comedy, and to the seriousness, of dead Donner's predicament. Donner's art is nothing without the individual experience which is its reality, but this experience is founded in an art which provides no definition or guarantee. What, in all this, is the real thing?

THE TITLE OF THE NEW PLAY, *The Real Thing*, is shared with a famous story by Henry James, in which two pathetic old-fashioned individuals (confident at least of their reality, since it is the product of a social order which they have yet to question) are forced by penury to pose for a painter. A fatal mistake. In the glare of art their social guarantee, and hence their reality, evaporates. Only anxiety remains. Stoppard's artist is Henry, a playwright—brilliantly performed by Roger Rees—who lives in the dilemma posed by his art, not knowing whether his experience is the creature or the creator of his plays. Stoppard, whose plays are not so much drama as audio-visual metaphysics, is of course a gift to the talented producer. Nevertheless, both director, Peter Wood, and designer, Carl Toms, deserve the highest praise for their seemingly effortless production. By virtue of their work everything is presented so clearly as to be totally obscure, in just the way that the "real thing" is obscure whenever it gets up on stage. All the principals are actors, engaged in speaking lines which Henry might have written, and sometimes has written, so rehearsing before him the enigma of his existence.

Once again the revolutionary consciousness appears, in the person of an ignorant Scottish soldier, Brodie. Brodie has become a fashionable radical cause, having taken part in a Peace March, burning a wreath as he passed the Cenotaph, and so ending up in jail on a charge of arson. Much of the plot turns on this character, who appears only at the end, but who is the recipient of concern from Henry's second wife Annie, finely acted by Felicity Kendal. While in prison Brodie writes a play about his experience, including his meeting with Annie on a train. Annie seeks to have this play performed. Through Henry, Stoppard is able to strike some well-aimed blows at the posturing of the radical chic, and at the emotional fantasies which find release in facile indignations. But what Henry objects to is the terrible abuse of language which the revolutionary consciousness entails. Brodie, says Henry's friend Max, "got hammered by an emotional backlash", and Henry protests, "No, no, you *can't* . . .", so precipitating a quarrel for the sake of words. Or is it for the sake of words? Max complains that "that's what life's about—messy bits of good and bad luck, and people caring and not necessarily having all the answers. . . ." Henry's obsession with language, he implies, is no more than a snobbish isolation from the ordinary conscience.

Max's words are intended to support Annie, but it turns out that she cares neither for Brodie nor his cause, but only for the theatrical gesture with which she had originally enticed him into it; while Brodie himself, we discover, so far from being the real thing, is a jumped-up creation of the theatre, the quality of whose sentiments is revealed by the appalling language of his play. Henry cunningly compares Brodie's play to a cudgel used in place of a cricket bat: "What we're trying to do is to write cricket bats, so that when we throw up an idea and give it a little knock, it might *travel*. . . ."—and the image is developed in a masterly and devastating criticism of the radical butchery of language:

> "I can't help somebody who thinks, or thinks he thinks, that editing a newspaper is censorship, or that throwing bricks is a demonstration while building tower blocks is social violence, or that unpalatable statement is provocation while disrupting the speaker is the exercise of free speech. . . . Words don't deserve that kind of malarkey. They're innocent, neutral, precise, standing for this, describing that, meaning the other, so if you look after them you can build bridges across incomprehension and chaos. But when they get their corners knocked off, they're no good any more, and Brodie knocks corners off without knowing he's doing it. So everything

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he builds is jerry-built. It's rubbish. An intelligent child could push it over. I don't think writers are sacred, but words are. . . ."

In the end, we are to understand, the fault of Brodie's language is not that it is crude, heavy, gratuitous—although it is all of those—but that it is *unreal*. Nothing speaks from it, nothing comes out of it, besides itself. By posturing as the *real* thing, the thing outside art, it loses the aid which art can bring. It too becomes self-referential. But unlike art, which strives always to make room in its centre for the individual experience, the jargon-ridden language of revolution makes room only for itself. Its self-reference is of a more deadly kind; it is like a blind drawn down on our only window on the world, where we stand hopelessly looking for that elusive thing, the self.

IN THE SECOND ACT the tone of the play becomes increasingly serious, as Stoppard tries to provide the reality which he has promised, the reality, as it transpires, of love between Henry and Annie. But the writing becomes looser, and at times disjointed. Too much cleverness has been stored in the first part of the play, and there is little room for more. Only the theatricalisation of Brodie has yet to be accomplished, in a little vignette of slapstick; when it is over Henry and Annie are left wordless and incomplete. In one way this is inevitable, but it prompts one to reflect on the imperfection of Stoppard's art.

Stoppard is not a dramatist—he does not portray characters, who develop in relation to each other, and generate dialogue from their mutual constraints. He strings characters like puppets on a line of repartee: his masters are Wilde and Shaw, and his ideal of dialogue is an exchange not of feelings, but of epigrams. The real thing is never in his words, which contain only the idea of it, in the form of brilliantly staged metaphysical conundrums. The result is of course good theatre, and, when acted with the verve of Felicity Kendal and Roger Rees, utterly compelling. But it is the *effect* of theatre—a kind of theatresque—and an effect without a cause cannot be described as quite the real thing.

Famous Poets

We formed a group, expressly to espouse
the living voice, and met in Wordsworth House

of noble frontage, earnest to imbibe
such idiolects as magnify the tribe.

So, kitted out in verity and ruth
and compasses and brandy, bound for Cockermouth

a clerisy of poets brought to bed
the best that they had thought and felt and said.

The dandies joked, the stoics stood affronted.
The vox pops, shy of brow, all *fuck*-ed and *cunt*-ed.

Mute as a landscape, still as winter reed
packed audiences waited for a seed

and shared good dumbness, wondering at the row
of parallels fronting a poet's brow.

Between, before and after, meeting trains
or dining on the great man's starry brains

we peer into the life, whose shadowed fame
lurks somewhere in the binary of a name.

My wife, the litmus test, pronounces: he
(or she) is of the species still; or wants to be.

William Scammell

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The Trouble with Nark's Work

By David Pryce-Jones

Au Pilori was a magazine once published in Paris in very different circumstances from *Private Eye* today, yet their similarities in style and spirit are astonishing, and instructive. In both cases, the invaluable and undisputed right of the press to comment on everybody and everything was taken to extremes. Neither polite convention nor the law acted as restraints. Both magazines shared the same fantasy that there is nothing admirable in the world, no brave or generous men, only scoundrels and back-sliders who have to be exposed with mockery and punished without mercy. The role of the press as guardian of the public realm, as the fourth estate, has thereby been inverted as these magazines turned themselves into engines of persecution. "Who made thee a prince and a judge over us?" was the question asked of Moses when he sought a morally unjustified position of authority over others. It is the question of every citizen facing a self-appointed persecutor.

Au Pilori was founded shortly before the Second World War, in the days of Léon Blum's Popular Front. Even in the none too fastidious world of Paris journalism, it soon acquired a reputation all its own, as it sought to show that those prominent in public life were rich, crooks, Jews and Freemasons, all terms taken to be more or less synonymous.

The German occupation of Paris in June 1940 freed the paper from all previous restrictions of law and of taste. The prejudices and whims current in the *Au Pilori* office conveniently happened to coincide with those of the German authorities now in power. No need for censorship there. *Au Pilori* accordingly went to town. A raucous satirical spirit among its writers and cartoonists produced an impression of fun which also obscured the deadly effect of a magazine telling tales about people whom the authorities were seeking to attack and eventually destroy. Nobody could afford to ignore *Au Pilori*. Circulation rose to 250,000 or more copies. Though primarily concerned with assertion of themselves and their opinions, the owners of *Au Pilori* were not sorry to earn a great deal of money as well.

Many of the "scoops" were designed to keep government up to the mark: Admiral Darlan was revealed as the son of a prominent Freemason, if not one himself; Pierre Laval had addressed Masonic Lodges in the past; Cardinal Gerlier, no collaborator, had been promised the Papacy in the event of an Allied victory; the Abbé Glassberg, a converted Jew, visited detention camps in order to free inmates to drink champagne with him.... Regular lists were published of Freemasons in all walks of life, or of Jews who were Vichy bureaucrats, or aristocrats with crypto-Jewish ancestry. Accusations of fraud and black-marketeering were printed in virtually every issue. Those wrongly accused of being Freemasons, Jews or crooks, could not sue. Their indignant letters to the editor were published, occasionally with an apology, more often with a sneer.

Nothing proved too small for attention. The lavatories in the station of Saint-Germain-en-Laye were found to be repulsive. The mayor of Garches used a room in his *mairie* for "private discussions" with a secretary. Minor officials were a favourite target. A man had knocked together 26 wooden crates in his garden in the rue Méchain (what was he carrying off?). In the avenue Niel a grocer preferred customers who could pay above-market prices, "and if that proves true, we can only recommend this grocery to our national-socialist friends."

"*L'Art Kasher*" was a regular feature purging the art world. Books were examined, not always predictably, as when Albert Camus's Wartime novel *L'Etranger* received a nod. But nothing inspired so much good humour in *Au Pilori* supporters, and fear in everyone else, as unsigned columns with the titles "*Micro et Confessions*" and "*Ici on Scalpe*", "*Tir de Barrage*" and "*Nous Clouons Au Pilori.*" All served the same purpose. One pithy item after another drew the attention of the relevant authorities to grounds for hounding

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those named, whose addresses were sometimes added for good measure. Democratic politicians, owners of businesses, doctors and lawyers, were easy to pick up; but *Au Pilori* covered the full social range down to the postman at Courneuve. Nor were there any illusions about what happened next. *Au Pilori* took the greatest pleasure in the death of enemies. When Marx Dormoy, Minister of the Interior during the Popular Front, was murdered by gunmen in the pay of the Germans, *Au Pilori* had the characteristic headline, *Et D'un! A Qui le Tour du Plomb Dans la Tête?* ("One for Us! Who's next for lead in the head?").

Readers were invited to provide stories for these columns, and paid money if they did so. A network of informers was thus set up. The novelist Céline wrote in to encourage defamation because it led to the Stake and the Rope, as he put it in his blithe way. Editorial advice was clear. "Many readers ask us which organisation they should address themselves to in order to point out Jewish occult activities and fraud. It is enough to send a letter or a signed note to the *Commissariat aux Questions Juives*, or else to our office for transmission." By means of *Au Pilori*'s energetic and successful campaigning, tens of thousands of people were delivered to the authorities, whether French or German, who could then further claim that public opinion was demanding the ensuing persecution.

IN A DEMOCRACY, systematic denunciation of this kind does not carry the same penalties as under totalitarian rule. Citizens of democracies need suffer nothing worse at the hands of the press than a career wrecked, followed perhaps by arrest, or a reputation lost, a marriage shattered, a personal hurt revealed. Our *Private Eye*, it is true, gloats over the death of those considered its particular enemies, but fortunately in no way could it cause those deaths. Supporters may argue that those who choose the limelight have only themselves to blame for whatever is then exposed. But what about hitherto obscure people, suddenly hoicked into public view in one or another of its several unsigned columns for lapses, often at the level of keeping dirty lavatories or having "private discussions" with a secretary? Self-appointed to the role of prince and judge, such columns are out for revenge, from motives which are undeclared but can only be malicious. (Perhaps this is the point to record that I myself have been mentioned in them hardly more than once or twice, always in a context of amusing make-believe.)

PERSONALITIES, not principles, preoccupy Patrick Marnham in the dispiriting little account he gives of the magazine,[1] as though its office quarrels mattered. Exposure for the sake of exposure, and never mind the cost to anyone, is not questioned.

Zeal to identify and persecute makes *Private Eye* the spitting image of *Au Pilori*—though specially delighted to catch Jews, of course it spreads wider the net.

> "The investigators at the Department of Trade and Industry (if such there be) might like to look at the report of the Assistant Official Receiver. . . . There is a provision in the Companies Act to prohibit people like [him] from taking part in the management of a company where several liquidations and failures have been proved, but obviously the Department of Trade has not yet caught up with him. . . . This should be of interest to planning officers as this property has planning permission to operate only as rental accommodation. . . . [These activities] look like attracting the interest of the Inland Revenue. . . . Meanwhile the VAT men watch with interest. . . . The Director of Public Prosecutions should take note."

Each of these phrases is a quotation, and almost any issue of the magazine will provide equivalent examples of such straightforward tip-offs to the relevant authorities, who can ignore them only at their own peril.

As in Paris under occupation, a whole seething underworld of informers is sometimes startlingly revealed. Their unsigned denunciations are apparently acted on, instead of being thrown into the waste-paper basket. "Mr William Hamilton, MP for West Fife . . . received an anonymous letter from Scotland which directed his attention to the Ninewells Teaching Hospital in Dundee [and] Mr Hamilton passed this letter on to Mr Robert Carr who is expected to launch an urgent and immediate inquiry into allegations. . . . An anonymous letter to the *Eye* asks why Dr Gerald Vaughan, the Minister of Health, is still being paid by Guy's Hospital. . . . Despite Commander Ron Steventon's denial—'I would never question a detective on the basis of a story in *Private Eye*'—this is just what he did." *Private Eye* readers are paid small sums of money for information submitted and printed.

To act the informer is, I am afraid, quite as much a source of pride for *Private Eye* as it was for *Au Pilori*. "Our revelations about [his] unusual business practices in the last issue of the *Eye* appear to have sparked off great interest among the various law-enforcing agencies of this country. . . . One day after the publication of our story about [him] the Obscene Publications Squad raided all the business premises."

Suppose for a moment that every one of those

[1] *The Private Eye Story*. By PATRICK MARNHAM. Deutsch, £7.95.

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fingered in *Private Eye* is a villain and a scoundrel, and that the facts are correct (which is not the case—Marnham gives a figure of 2,000 writs over a period of 21 years). A good proportion of those denounced in *Au Pilori* were indeed Freemasons, Jews, and Allied sympathisers, and some were rich, but that was not judged a valid defence of the magazine at the liberation. The democratic state has its investigation and enforcement agencies, and remains in full control of them, rather too full a control in the opinion of those who believe that tolerance is an aspect of justice. There is rarely any call to go beyond the due process of law. If for some reason journalists burn to place fellow citizens in the pillory or behind bars, then there are normal civil and civilised ways for them to play their part. They might even prefer to enrol as officials of the state.

One suspects that under the masquerade of moral passion are personal ambitions, envy, and contempt for things human. Otherwise how could the world always be depicted as a scoundrel's playground? When insufficient constraints are formed either by good manners or the law, as in *Au Pilori*'s Paris or *Private Eye*'s London, there is no protection against this type of self-assertion. The way lies open for those who are at the prey of their prejudices and fantasies to impose them on everyone as nastily as they please. Redress of abuse and injustice is one thing, nark's work another; and to confuse the two is to devalue free speech altogether.

London Commentary

The Arable Mafia

Keeping Them Down on the Farm—By EDWARD PEARCE

THERE IS A ratio somewhere waiting for a name. It says very simply that the popularity of an economic move among politicians stands in roughly inverse ratio to its utility. The Government has had a relatively easy time with its own internal critics. Interest rates were coming down; the inflation rate is still coming down; only the inexorable march of the unemployment figures looked wrong from a political point of view.

Since then we have had a hiccup (and one trusts that it will be nothing worse) with interest rates going up a point and the Chancellor conceding in his dogged way that inflation is likely to do a fishhook on the graph before the end of 1983. Now, if things are mildly less good than they should be, one hesitantly suggests that perhaps politics have been getting into the works of economics—and that the stern unbending approach to credit has been a small, politically-designated fraction less stern, less unbending, than it should have been.

We have an election coming and the mind of even the bleakest realist turns wistfully towards "goodies." Good economists tend to find the best and most scrupulous politicians preoccupied, at this time of a Parliament's life, with the "short term." The Thatcher Government is not immune from the urge to strike matches when the light at the end of its tunnel does not appear on schedule. Yet surely this sort of lapse into conventional politics is a mistake even in political terms. For support has stood up and does stand up despite the employment figures. The application of a greater degree of financial rectitude has actually won support.

A. E. Housman had a line which describes the instincts of most governments:

> *To look into the pewter pot*
> *And see the world as the world's not.*

In an age of negative real-interest rates such as we all shared during the 1970s anything can be floated, recycled, or otherwise foozled ... for a while. Before that is, "The Gods of the Copybook Headings come limping up to explain." Between Housman and Kipling there is a good deal of political wisdom. And we have not in Britain had our heads in that pot—at least not for the second and third years of Thatcherism. In the first year Mrs Thatcher and Sir Geoffrey Howe for all the valour of their talk got it wrong. They bought a soft option—tax cuts in which there was no virtue or utility. They were not dressed up in the messianic language of the American supply-siders but they were just as dead wrong. The only truth worth telling about tax cuts is that they are nice for taxpayers. But if you don't believe in stimulating

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demand (and how right you are), what is the precise point of demand-stimulation? Mr David Stockman got it exactly right in the off-the-record interview for which he had to apologise before its contemptuous dismissal of supply-siding became US government policy only a few months later. So our government had one initial error in common with the Reagan administration. And it had one all of its own.

Britain is a country which has in the last quarter-century become constitutionally addicted to "wise men." Their institution is an act of political timidity because they are hired to do the government's surrendering for it. People like me who spend a good part of their lives in the press gallery of the House of Commons listen with a special dread for the ministerial voice asserting that such and such—an irrational addition to labour costs which will be standing godfather to further inflation and unemployment—is not really the Government's fault, but that they are bound in honour to accept the report of Lord Fudge's Independent Review Tribunal. . . . Independent Review Tribunal, the very words are like a knell! And the bell tolls the word CLEGG, Professor Hugh Clegg, nice man, untidy moustache, broadly moderate Social-Democratic opinions, Nuffield College economist, not very good with numbers!

Literally he was not good at arithmetic, having actually got some of his sums wrong, but more to the point he loaded more than a billion pounds on to the Public Sector Borrowing Requirement (PSBR) in the form of wage increases for teachers.

The Prime Minister had unhappily made a pledge during the election that the Clegg "recommendations" would be accepted. It had become a moral issue, and personally I am for a measure of immorality in these matters. If only politicians would *not* keep their promises, if only they would seek the market price of such morality and find demand for it inelastic.

But the errors of "early Thatcher"—a conventional tax hand-out and a submission to a salary tribunal making a moral judgment on what people *deserved* relative to other people, innocent of all economic consequences, were more than made up for by subsequent actions. And of these the centrepiece, the essence of the Government at its best, was the 1981 Budget. Now that budget was damned-to-hell by politicians—and by no politicians more noisily and (in private) venomously than by Tory politicians. For it broke all the political rules just as it kept the economic ones. There were cuts, broadly characterised as "vicious"; and the soul of man yearning for re-election cried out at them. But it took the best part of five billions out of the economy. It was followed by no autumn financial crisis, no autumn budget, no Denis-Healeyesque last-minute tribute to Necessity. And if there is now a virtuous circle in the economy (which I think there may be), it started here. If there has been a better record on inflation than most of our competitors, if foreign Finance Ministers are looking with new respect at the British for doing then what they find themselves doing now, if it has been possible for interest rates to move down, then the teeth-clenching acknowledgment of the Quantity Theory of Money in 1981 is at the root of it.

THE DECISIONS were reached painfully, with much resistance in certain quarters; and some of the heroes will have to stay unsung for the time being. But it did work, and the hard foundations of this government's tall tower of financial rectitude were laid. In the process we learnt that the things which work hurt; and there was a subtle shift from rhetoric to reality. Instead of wishing bravely but drifting with the consensus, the Government had begun to *make* the consensus (and not just at home).

Curiously enough, what should have been bad medicine politically has come to be accepted. For a scrupulous government should be in the business of the world as the world is, not in the business of "goodies"; and people responding to coherence at last will hear a truth told plain. Everybody in Britain, vaguely or imprecisely, *knows* that heavy unemployment was preceded by heavier overmanning and suspects that the realism of the 1980s comes twenty years after it should have started. The scandals which I have related here about the corruption of the Fleet Street printers and machine-minders were not precisely mirrored in the whole industrial economy. No one can be *that* bad, but ghost shifts and absurd productivity were the order at British Leyland, while in the British steel industry, now so shattered, there was a benign belief—accommodated by successive governments—that many men in work was socially desirable (which of course it is), that somehow plants which were uneconomic even on a buoyant world market should stay open, and that losses which out-Clegged Clegg in terms of the public sector should be endured.

AT THE END OF sweet subsidy comes bitter retribution. And to a certain kind of London-and-Home-counties-based person it gives a peculiarly evil-smelling pleasure. The arguments of necessity which say that ultimately, subsidy and over-manning are disastrous (and not least for those who at first seem to benefit from them) are a thousand miles away from the geographical warfare always lurking in Britain between our own North and South, between glossy London and broken Consett, between the sleek shires and Scotland on relief.

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The reasons for what is happening are as sound as truth. We cannot be reflated out of depression. We got into that depression Britain-wide by being inefficient competitors, and world-wide by an American inflation, starting in the mid-1960s, which made credit cheap, even offered it at a premium, and in the process made an unrepayable burden of debt the latest and most fashionable thing. If there is a truth which should be written in letters half a mile high, it is that there is no compassion in monetised debt!

Britain has been rigorous since that 1981 Budget. But there are still melancholy temptations, one of which is protection. We already have agricultural protection in the form of the Common Agricultural Policy. The effect of this—as Richard Body, a Conservative MP representing an agricultural constituency, has recently argued with great force—is to encourage marginal production at home at the cost of poorer and cheaper producers in what I prefer to call the Poor World. It has put vast sums into the pockets of the already rich; it has led to a defilement of the English landscape into mini-prairies; and it has hoisted the price of food beyond the power of metaphor. But it goes unchallenged since it benefits a closely-knit group of the *Hochgeboren* and well-connected, an arable mafia whose offers are not lightly refused.

It is a conspiracy which has too many winners, from the British ruling class to the Soviet Praesidium, deeply involved. Every now and then our sleek little Foreign Minister, Francis Pym, stands up in the House of Commons and says that the CAP, with all its corrupting inducements to grotesque overproduction, is of course much at fault and that every effort will be made to reform it. This from a Bedfordshire land-owner is simply a joke in bad taste. Dear food and rich farmers are part of the order of things. So is cheap subvention of the Soviet Union. Since the last time the Council of Ministers promised to look into the matter of subsidised food exports to the Russians they have risen threefold in volume and fivefold in value!

The farmers get away with their overproduction, the EEC gets away with the grand larceny of the Common Agricultural Policy, and the British Minister of Agriculture gets away with a shaming arrogance and complacency on the subject. For we are habituated to the high prices, habituated for that matter, to the share which they took in creating high money wages, less competitive manufactured goods, lost markets, and the lost jobs which inevitably followed.

WE HAVE REVERTED under the EEC to a sort of mega-Bentinckism, protection of the producer on a sub-continental scale with all the unstated costs which flow from it. *The Economist* (often sensible, even if as often peremptory and arrogant in its manner) carried the front-page slogan at the end of November, "GO TO WORK ON A WAGE-CUT." The British industrial worker in the north of England has taken a lot, some of it through the foolishness of his own leaders; much of it through the wilful disposition towards inflation of the politicians who incur debt and monetise it, and who join trade blocs with which they subsequently have a sustained, very large, trade deficit. Now he is told—correctly in arithmetical terms, but condescendingly, in the manner of metropolitan journalists—to take a wage-cut! It might be rather more to the point if we took a food-price cut. The means are there in the Third World, in the Commonwealth, and in the USA.

The CAP is a corrupt nonsense benefiting a clutch of inefficient producers. The world food market is so low that any country which went into it now could price itself and its workers into a great many things, including jobs. For the CAP, whatever it does for the kulaks in whipcord breeches, however it may maintain the farmer's immemorial right to have a second Jaguar standing in his yard, is destructive of Britain the industrial nation. And it is a very great condemnation of the Conservative Party that it has become the creature of a producer lobby. If that lobby were thrust aside by phased or single-act decision, if we broke the rules of the EEC and pursued the interests of the British people, world food prices would ultimately rise, though never to the money-with-menaces levels which sustain the Bavarian Sunday-Milkers or the land-owners in the Tory Cabinet. For the countries of the EEC would follow us on to that world market, and it is high time that they did. Why there should not be a free market in food is a question incapable of answer. We do not need self-sufficiency against the day of a war; if it comes, it isn't going to be that sort of a war. Agriculture is not a sustainer of labour. No single group of employers, with the possible exception of the textile manufacturers who have seen their own time out on low wages and pitiful investment, has been as contemptuous of labour, as willing to apply to it the rules of the market which it keeps from its own smooth hide.

If we entered the world markets for food tomorrow, the efficient British farmer would survive and do very well on the quality and price of his goods; the inefficient or marginal farmer would not. That is what Mrs Thatcher never tires of telling the industrial worker. And the industrial worker could be offered the foundation for a cut in money wages by cheaper food which would make his product more competitive and so increase the demand for it.

Mrs Thatcher's essentially Liberal policies, which (God knows) we should have got round to

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25 years ago when the going was better than it is, are right; but they are clogged and contradicted by a stupid Toryism, the Toryism of the farmer with his fist clenched inside the protectionist honeypot.

The steelworker has paid his dues; the time has come for the land-owner to pay his. And the farmer's dues are payable to the industrial worker. Such a move would of course be unpopular with politicians on the Government backbenches, which, if our ratio is correct, is simply one more point in its favour.

A Meeting with Robert Graves

By Dannie Abse

I THINK Sam Wanamaker, the American-born actor, sometimes stands at a window of his house in Southwark, Bankside, and sees his immediate environs not as they now are but as they were in Shakespeare's time. Certainly he imagines Southwark as it may be in the future, as it ought to be. Mr Wanamaker's vision is that of a Bankside once again thriving, bustling with denizens of London in search of serious entertainment—the Globe Playhouse itself, reconstructed. To realise that vision Sam Wanamaker formed the Globe Theatre Centre and since 1972 has encouraged contemporary poets, each year, to honour on the page and on the platform the supreme poet and dramatist of all time. For one of the centre's commendable aims was, and is, "to create a Shakespeare Birthday Fund which will commission new works of music, poetry, drama and art to be presented annually as the most appropriate tribute to Shakespeare's memory."

In April 1972 Sam Wanamaker accordingly planned a concert in Southwark Cathedral. Nine contemporary composers were commissioned to contribute music, thirteen contemporary poets to write poems and speak them. I remember being somewhat pleased *and* worried when Christopher Hampton, on Mr Wanamaker's behalf, asked me to be one of the poets—pleased because Mr Hampton had invited, or intended to invite, a number of poets including W. H. Auden and Robert Graves whom I admired but had not met and now would meet; worried because I knew that poetry is something that cannot be willed, that I could not will a poem into existence, that I might not be able to keep a promise to provide a new poem for the occasion. As Shelley once wrote, "Poetry is not like reasoning, a power to be exerted according to the determination of the will. A man cannot say, 'I will compose poetry.' The greatest poet even cannot say it; for the mind in creation is as a fading coal, which some invisible influence, like an inconstant wind, awakens to transitory brightness. . . ." Nevertheless, persuaded by Christopher Hampton, I accepted the commission and eventually, armed with a new poem, I went along to Southwark Cathedral to read it.

I suppose many of us have wished sometimes, frail and silly wishes, that we could turn back the clock, be transported if only for an instant to a certain place, at a certain time. Driving over towards Southwark, I wished uselessly that I could have attended a Shakespeare play at the original Globe Theatre—perhaps *Julius Caesar*, for I had read a description by a Thomas Platter of an evening at the Globe when he saw that play. "After dinner, at about two o'clock, I went with my party across the water", wrote Thomas Platter. "In the straw-thatched house we saw the tragedy of the first Emperor Julius Caesar, very pleasantly performed, with approximately fifteen characters; at the end of the play they danced together admirably and exceedingly gracefully, according to their custom, two in each group dressed in men's and two in women's apparel." Yes, it would have been interesting to have travelled across the water in that party; as a guest from another century it would be like being a stranger in a foreign land.

Instead I drove through 20th-century London towards London Bridge in my Austin 1300. It was a lovely, fresh April day; it was good to be alive. Soon, before me lay Southwark Cathedral where that afternoon I would discover, I hoped, one more sweet beginning and no unsavoury end. I parked the car, then walked into the cathedral to meet, at once, Christopher Hampton who told me that Cecil Day Lewis was seriously ill, was in fact dying; also that W. H. Auden would not be with us for he was in New York.

"You'll be reading your poem in the second half, after an interval", Christopher said. "Is that all right? Let me show you where I want you to sit."

As I followed Christopher I saw, near the door in the north aisle of the nave, Sam Wanamaker talking to Stephen Spender, Peter Porter, and an

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elderly man whom I did not know. Could it be Robert Graves, I wondered.

"Yes", said Christopher, "he looks pretty fit, doesn't he? He's seventy-six now, you know."

I recalled Graves's own self-portrait:

Crookedly broken nose—low tackling caused it;
Cheeks, furrowed; coarse grey hair, flying
frenetic;
Forehead, wrinkled and high;
Jowls, prominent; ears, large; jaw, pugilistic;
Teeth, few; lips, full and ruddy; mouth, ascetic.

I paused with razor poised, scowling derision
At the mirrored man whose beard needs my
attention
And once more ask him why
He still stands ready, with a boy's presumption,
To court the queen in her high silk pavilion.

His face had softened with age evidently, but he still looked sprightly enough to chase that same queen and catch her. In the choir stalls Christopher pointed to the seat he wanted me to occupy, immediately after the interval. "Between Graves and Adrian Mitchell, all right?"

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I HAD LIKED Robert Graves's poetry for many years: it was always well-organised and lucid, always an internally directed soliloquy that the reader, as it were, was privileged to overhear. He composed poems in the central English lyric tradition and he used a conservative diction and a logical syntax without display, though not without the power to surprise. His was an essentially romantic sensibility with its belief in phantoms and miracle; in the terrifying and terrific supernatural; in his interest in myth as a living, operative power even in our so-called rational societies; and not least in his preoccupation with the creative and destructive element that waxes and wanes in a man-woman relationship. Yes, I looked forward to meeting Robert Graves; besides, his reputation as a man was intriguing. I had heard how he could be iconoclastic, anti-academic; how he was quick to deflate lofty pretensions, how he could be wittily bitchy about his most celebrated contemporaries.

I was introduced to him in the Harvard Chapel, which lay behind the north choir aisle, as the buzzing audience were returning to their seats in the nave after the interval. "John Harvard", Robert Graves told me, "was baptised here in 1607." I assumed John Harvard was the gentleman who emigrated to Massachusetts to make a fortune and to found Harvard College. I was not sure, though, and not wishing to boob I said nothing. Soon Robert Graves was telling me, as we took our seats in the choir, all kinds of esoteric information about the cathedral. He seemed anxious to instruct me. My knowledge of the cathedral was small, my ignorance large—and even if I should have dared to pronounce on that which I did know, it would have been without confidence, like a blind man naming the colours in a rainbow. Instead, I told him the names of the poets who, one by one, faced the very large audience, for he was most eager to identify them. "Who's that?" he would spit out to me.

"Vernon Scannell", I'd say and as soon as Vernon had finished his poem and the next piece of music commenced—by Richard Rodney Bennett or Lennox Berkeley or Peter Maxwell Davies or John Tavener—Robert Graves would generously impart to me his next small piece of scholarship: "Edward Shakespeare, William's youngest brother, was buried in the churchyard here." He pulled out a snuffbox, an antique, from his pocket and surreptitiously showed it to me. I learnt a few quick facts about that snuffbox, its provenance, before the music ended. "Who's that?" asked Robert Graves a minute later. "Peter Redgrove", I said.

For the next twenty minutes we bartered information for information. His numerous facts for my one name. He mentioned Hollar's drawing of the Bankside three centuries past and I believe if

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the musical pieces had been more prolonged I would have learnt of "the colouring of Titian, the grace of Raphael, the purity of Domenichino, the *corregiescity* of Correggio, the learning of Poussin, the airs of Guido, the taste of the Carracci, or the grand contours of Michelangelo." I began to feel that my contribution to the whispered dialogue was insufficient. I tried to think of some relevant piece of recondite information *I* could drop; but all I could think of was a conversation I had once with a man who worked at London Zoo who had told me that tortoises often died of diphtheria. Somehow, to state baldly there and then, "Tortoises frequently die because of diphtheroid organisms in their throat", did not seem right and proper.

In any event, suddenly, a whole group of strangers descended upon us and began to sing a song for Shakespeare's birthday, 1972. Robert Graves seemed pleased: he had written the words for it. We both listened intently as a maniacal conductor waved his arms and the choir *so near, so loud*, sang:

When Will sat forging plays with busy friends
He wrote no worse than they;
When he sat writing for his loves, and us,
Such play outshone all play.
And still it does today.

I had the sense *not* to say, "That was pretty awful." I smiled like a hypocrite when the audience applauded enthusiastically as the immoderate choir scurried away and Robert Graves stood to his feet. He raised two hands like a triumphant boxer who had knocked his opponent out. It was certainly hard to think of him as one aged seventy-six. Back in his corner, I mean his seat, he whispered to me, "That was the best thing we've heard all afternoon."

"Who's that?" Robert Graves asked.

"George MacBeth", I replied.

Eventually it was my turn to walk the twenty-two yards to the scaffold and face all those seated figures in the soaring, elongated nave (rebuilt, I think Robert Graves said, in 1897 to replace the, er, 13th-century nave destroyed, er, in 1838). It is not easy to read one poem only. As soon as you become used to the stressful situation, the hundreds of upturned faces, the different sources of light, the unfriendly microphone, the whole thing is over. You have been bowled out, the audience are clapping out of habit but you are walking back to the pavilion pulling off your batting gloves; knowing that you have made a duck. I sat down and took my own pulse.

Music began—by Harrison Birtwhistle.

Robert Graves leaned over towards me. I thought he was going to say, "Well done", or "That was a good poem"—something sensible like that. Instead he whispered more confidentially, "He nodded at me, you know."

"What?" I asked, wondering.

"He nodded at me."

"Who?"

"The Prime Minister."

I paused. When I was reading, I had spotted someone in the front row, in spitting distance, a man with a red, adipose, shining face who did, come to think of it, look very familiar.

"Edward Heath?" I asked.

"Of course", Robert Graves said irritably, as if I were a dunce and did not know with certainty even the name of the present Prime Minister.

For my part, I felt irritated with Robert Graves. He was supposed to be a rebel, a nonconformist; and now here he was full of ridiculous pride, *hubris*, because the Prime Minister, a *Tory* Prime Minister (whom, of course, *I* did not vote for), had nodded at him.

"What did you do?" I whispered.

"I nodded back", Robert Graves said.

At this point, Adrian Mitchell who had just arrived, late—at least he looked as if he had just parked his motorbike at the south transept door—took the empty seat on my left-hand side.

"Adrian", I said quietly, "Mr Graves is on nodding terms with our Prime Minister."

I explained to Adrian that the Prime Minister was sitting in the front row. This information activated Adrian Mitchell—his skin, eyes, horns altered. "Is Heath here?" hissed Adrian between bared teeth, his face contorted, vivid with displeasure. Evidently Adrian regarded Heath as an amalgam of Caligula and Hitler.

Just then Birtwhistle's music ceased and the audience applauded again.

"Yes", said Robert Graves benignly, cheerful, leaning over me towards Adrian Mitchell, "Mr Heath's sitting in the front row." But now it was Adrian's turn to read his poem. He almost ran towards the microphone.

"Who's that?" asked Robert Graves, startled.

THERE are those who hardly know what they think until they express it either vocally or on the page. That is not true of Adrian Mitchell. His political views are not shaded. They inform and energise his work, they translate him as a man, they draw him, as it were, as clearly as a pencil can draw a profile. I have a feeling that Adrian perceived no human being occupying that chair in the front row but a monstrous cartoon figure, one responsible for all the treachery in the world, all the injustice, coercion, easy manipulation, casual greed, inequality, unnecessary pain. Now, at last, here was a chance of a lifetime to confront bluntly that one who had previously stood in the shadow,

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that cartoon figure, that prime adversary. Adrian boiled with rage. He began to abuse Edward Heath, accused him of being partly responsible for the chemical warfare in Viet Nam, and those at the back of the nave, far away, clapped while those somewhat wealthier, in front, nearer to the presence of the Prime Minister, sat dumbly. Then Adrian Mitchell read his poem and afterwards, in reverse, curiously pale, rushed past us through the choir to disappear down the south transept whence he had come.

Some music started up—by Elizabeth Lutyens, I think—and Robert Graves said, "You've seen the tomb of Lancelot Andrewes? He was buried originally in the Bishop's Chapel, you know."

The concert was almost over, this was the last musical composition and all the poets had read their commissioned poems. Sam Wanamaker had arranged for the concert to conclude with a reading by the actress Diane Cilento. She had been asked to recite the epitaph by John Milton on the Admirable Dramatick Poet, W. Shakespeare. The attractive blonde actress moved to the microphone and I happened to glance at Robert Graves who seemed to be following her progress with exceptional interest—rather, I thought, as the elderly King David must have looked upon, for the first time, the beautiful Abishag. Before the microphone Miss Cilento recited without book:

What needs my Shakespeare for his honour'd bones
The labour of an age in piled stones?
Or that his hallow'd reliques should be hid
Under a starry pointing pyramid?. . .
What need'st thou such weak witness of thy name?
Thou, in our wonder and astonishment
Hast built thyself a live-long monument. . . .

The Milton poem over, Diane Cilento bowed to the applauding audience with pleasing grace. "Who's that?" asked Robert Graves once more.

"Diane Cilento", I told him.

Robert Graves hesitated, furrowed his brows, nodded his head.

"Cilento", he said.

"Yes."

"Cilento. Quite a gifted poet", he said.

"She's an actress", I explained.

"An actress?" he asked.

"The poem was by Milton."

"Quite. Ah yes, I thought that poem sounded familiar."

I did not laugh. Robert Graves had made the sort of boob that I could have made. I looked at him with growing affection; he looked at me, puzzled.

Later, at the reception that followed the concert, near the entrance, I met Sam Wanamaker. "Let me introduce you to Robert Graves", he said. I looked across the crowded room and saw Mr Graves deep in dialogue with Mr Heath. "It's okay", I said. "We've met. In fact, we've had quite an intermittent, instructive conversation. We both enjoyed the music so much."

Instructions after a music lesson

Don't let your little finger lie flat on the keys
Little finger the sluggard like a peg doll
Longing for its box bed with confining sides
Little finger, the boy child wearing petticoats.
He needs watching. Play on your fingertips.
Now you've mastered the notes look ahead
To the pass where the notes lead: a cavalcade
Father, mother, daughters, sons, belongings strung
Out on the wagon train, all accounted for, all
Moving towards the open plain, the town.
The first half of your Mozart is lovely.
The young girl has just arrived at the hotel
Where she changes and washes her hair
Her peg doll is on the bed, she looks out . . .
Work on the rest for next week.

Elizabeth Smither

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Struggling Westward

America & the Coming of Modernism (II)

BY MALCOLM BRADBURY

IN MY LAST ARTICLE, I suggested that one of the ways we might explore the complicated relationship between the processes of modernisation and the coming, in the arts, of modernism was by looking at the acceptance of the experimental idea of the arts in the United States. Modernism, I suggested, started in the cosmopolitanism of Europe; but American writers, especially expatriate ones like Gertrude Stein and Ezra Pound, readily made a kinship with it, claimed it as intrinsically American, and in the course of time their prophecies were fulfilled. They claimed that kinship because the emerging new America was itself seen to be modern; and it is the growth of that sense of modernity, and the way in which definitions changed of the kind of arts most relevant to an expression of it, that I now want to pursue. I shall concentrate my comments primarily on examples from the novel, but it is by way of three exhibitions that I want to distinguish four stages in the American apprehension of modernism.

Let us start in 1893, and at the World's Columbian Exposition, which was held in the bursting, skyscrapered city of Chicago, a modern "shock city" which had been a village of 300 inhabitants just sixty years before, but was now America's Second City, its population over a million, a place grown from nothing to something as a result of America's modernising process: hog-butcher of the world, stacker of wheat, railhead of the plains. Here, in this new city, it was possible to build an inner city which aimed to display American achievements in science, technology and culture, the power of American change. It was here at the Exposition that the American historian Frederick Jackson Turner expounded his "thesis" on "The Significance of the Frontier in American History", arguing that American national character was the result of a distinctive psychic encounter with the frontier, the place of mobility and transformation. But the 1890 census had already found that the frontier line had just closed, and, as Alan Trachtenburg has lately pointed out, Turner spoke, through the scientific voice of modern history, in a "perspective of belated recognition", turning the perspective of the West back on to the city. For cities like Chicago were indeed becoming the new frontier, drawing in immigrants from Europe into its factories and stockyards, but also migrants off the plains, driven by agricultural mechanisation, rural depression, mortgages, the corporate commercial manipulation of the land, and the lure of the big city.

The city in fact was the new frontier, and America, founded as a society of yeoman farmers, was turning into that modern land of skyscrapers, machinery, trusts, corporations and conglomerates, capitalism, ghettos, radical mixtures, urban stress we are familiar with today. Another historian, Henry Adams, came to the Exposition; and, in *The Education of Henry Adams* (1907), he describes how, sitting down amid the machinery on display under Richard Hunt's dome, he felt himself confronted by a whole new power: "Chicago asked in 1893 for the first time the question of whether the American people knew where they were driving. . . . Chicago was the first expression of American thought as a unity." In the new systems of energy on display, a massive new process of growth and change was at work, and it needed, Adams felt, a new theory of history, a theory of exponential growth, to account for it. The ferments involved, Adams argued, were not just technical, but mental as well. Old educations, like Adams's own, were displaced; the nation needed a new historiography and a new consciousness, both to explain and to respond to the world in process of creation.

This sense of change was indeed everywhere in the United States as the new century approached. The nation's active centres were now the urban melting pot, the uneasy economy of the depressed homestead, the industrial and scientific processes that were spreading everywhere, the new systems of industrial organisation, the new patterns of immigration, from eastern and southern Europe, the labour conflicts that arose from them. America's entire character and imagery were changing, moving from an exemplification of one modernity—that of an individualistic, radical

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nation, rooted in its free soil and open space—to another, that of a modernising power forming a new kind of man in a new process of modernising society. America had always been modern, but it was now becoming modern in a different way—not a romantically libertarian society, but a society collectively modernising and moving firmly into advanced development. Some of the changes had been growing for decades, but the 1890s seemed to bring them into realisation and consciousness. And one place this sense of change is evident is in the work of writers, especially the new writers, like Stephen Crane, Frank Norris, and Hamlin Garland, who felt the change in structure as a change in discourse.

Appropriately, one of these writers, Hamlin Garland, whose book aptly entitled *Crumbling Idols* would appear the following year, was at the Exposition. Like Turner, he too found Chicago a suitable place to address the theme of the frontier, though, as any reader of Garland's stories in *Main-Travelled Roads* will know, it was a frontier beyond the Jeffersonian world of the yeoman farmer that he found—a frontier of economic depression, rural exposure, and pressure from the city. Garland thus argued that the voice of a new writing appropriate to the new west would be a writing shaped by modern scientific and positivist thought; it would recognise evolution, be a break with the past, expose economic and political truths. It might have local subjects, looking to the middle border or perhaps to cities like Chicago, but it would be shaped by the evolutionary and economic principles that alone could free the present from the past. Garland called the new tendency "veritism", and chose to reject a direct Zolaesque naturalism, because of its sexual frankness and its emphasis on the *bête humaine*. Yet there was little doubt that what he was speaking for was a version of realism scientised, a form of naturalism, and such forms were to become dominant in the work of the young writers of the American 1890s, responding to the new America that Henry Adams had perceived around him.

In the American 1890s, then, naturalism seemed the necessary modern tendency, the language for expressing the fundamental transitions from ruralism to industrialism, from genteel tradition to scientific world-view. Indeed the tendency seemed to acquire in the United States far greater influence, and to persist much longer, than it did in most of Europe, where of course it had begun. It was Zola, and Ibsen, and those they influenced, who helped fuel the new radical tendency which seemed so aptly to fit the American experience. Yet meanwhile, in Europe, just around this very same date, it was the fashionable news of Paris that naturalism was going out of style, under the challenge from new theories of perception, new concerns with subjective and psychological representation, a new decadence and aestheticism, a return to symbolism and the transcendence of the word. For in Europe, ideas were also in ferment: new explorations of the relation between the psychic life of the subject and the positivistic world of science and technology were evolving. Bohemia was in fashion again; the veil of symbolism trembled; decadence challenged not just positivist science but the liberal view of history as an ever-advancing and ever-enlightening process.

American thought, too, felt the pressure of this, not least in the work of Henry James—a long-term expatriate in Europe by now, but none the less deeply responsive to American as well as European thought, not least because of his brother William's work in psychology, behaviourism, and pragmatism. In the early 1890s James's work in fiction indeed reached a kind of arrest, perhaps under these pressures, so that it was not until 1897 that he returned to the novel, to begin what we think of as his late phase. I take these books to be essential precursory texts of fictional modernism: in them, James is obviously in process of dissolving the substance of his earlier realism in the interests of a new perceptual grammar, a new order of relation between subject and object, a new concern with the nature of seeing and knowing, a new foregrounding of the artist as the anxious point of intervention between an image of the world and the world as fact. But even in the more naturalistic tradition of native American fiction, we can see versions of this crisis, not least in the work of Stephen Crane, who, also in 1893, produced in *Maggie: A Girl of the Streets* a book that also sought to resolve the equation of process and consciousness, documentation and form.

Maggie is a work founded on many naturalist presumptions; in the presentation copies of the book, which he printed at his own expense, publishing in a mannered greenery-yallery cover, Crane wrote that it tried to show "that environment is a tremendous thing in the world, and frequently shapes lives regardless." It indeed constructs, in its underside view of New York, a portrait of the naturalist and Darwinian city engaged in endless biological and mechanical struggle, and takes a "progressive" view of the genteel morality that fails to see that this is so. Yet Crane's city is also the fleeting city of impressions, caught in vignettes, contrasts, chance images, so that its system is never perceived as complete. His most notable book, *The Red Badge of Courage* (1895), goes yet further. It turns on a coventional naturalist metaphor: life as battlefield, conducted in a world of contending impersonal forces which dwarf and ironise the individual, and challenge any humanistic or moralistic account of nature or society. It

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is thus a story of masses in their instinctive motion, as the machines of the two armies collectively fight not for just or unjust causes, but for mass survival. Yet, like Henry Adams, sitting down in "helpless reflection" before the modern machines in Chicago, Crane's novel too raised the question of the nature of consciousness and perception in this naturalist, inert, indifferent world, which is why I read it, too, as a text of early modernism.

The Red Badge is indeed a book where force displaces consciousness, but in which consciousness requires a new mode of perception and hence a new strategy of artistic expression. The book has two aesthetic perceivers. One is Henry Fleming, the "Youth", whose ordered consciousness is displaced by the motions of war and of instinct, and whose processes of apprehension become instantaneous, sudden, intuitive, his mental mode impressionistic and even camera-like ("His mind took a mechanical but firm impression, so that afterward everything was pictured and explained to him, save why he himself was there"). The other is the artist himself, who must likewise generate image from contingency, form from chaos, elicit a "hidden long logic" from his story, and hence become not the realistic reporter but the conscious and explicit artist. His book could likewise be doubly read: as a work of naturalism, as it largely was in the United States, and as a work of experimental impressionism, as it largely was when, at the end of his short life, he moved to England, and found himself admired by Henry James, Conrad and H. G. Wells for his "experiment." And ever since the book has retained something of this double reputation, feeding both sides of the balancing act between naturalism and impressionism out of which enquiry much of modern American fiction has been made. Crane's work in short represents an essential apprehension of modernism, in American terms—an apprehension consistent with the European developments of the 1890s, but with a special American face.

I MOVE NOW to my second exhibition, in another city: not now a shock-city of commerce, but the essential European art capital, Paris. In 1900, seven years after Chicago, Henry Adams attended another great international exhibition, the Great Exposition in Paris, and there found himself "lying in the Gallery of Machines . . . his historical neck broken by the sudden eruption of forces totally new." For Paris, he tells us in the *Education*, completed what Chicago had begun. In the intervening years Roentgen's X-rays had been discovered, and radium, that "metaphysical bomb", while the automobile had become "a nightmare at a hundred kilometres an hour"; fresh theories of

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relativity had shown that chaos and not order was the rule, and 19th-century positivism was dead. The mind was breaking down in front of new powers, the powers of the modern multiverse, and taking on ironic status in relation to force: "an avalanche of forces had fallen on it, which needed new mental powers to control. . . . It must merge in its super-sensual universe, or succumb to it." The symbol of that new proliferation of raw energy was the forty-foot dynamo, that "symbol of infinity," which dominated the Exposition, and "Before the end one began to pray to it; inherited instinct taught the natural expression of man before silent and infinite force."

But though this was Paris, the lesson of the Dynamo was especially, said Adams, a lesson for America, for "in America neither Venus nor Virgin ever had value as force"—and this was why, he explained, the American "could not run his machine and a woman too." It was America that was on its way to becoming the "twenty-million-horse-power society", and this meant that the new American would have to be either "the child of new forces or the chance sport of nature." Moreover, 1900 was the key year, when "the continuity snapped", and the modern multiverse started. Adams's extraordinary vision of change, proliferation and entropy was, of course, to influence that fascinating novelist of the world of late post-modern technology, Thomas Pynchon. But it might almost have influenced, though rather it coincided with, the appearance, in 1900, of a novel that seemed to respond almost instinctively to these anxious and ironic propositions. The book was *Sister Carrie*, by Theodore Dreiser—another work that is pre-eminently naturalist, yet which also seems to me to qualify naturalism in the direction of modernist experiment.

Sister Carrie is the story of a woman, the young Carrie Meeber, caught in a world of such super-sensual forces, and drifting through energy to entropy. It begins with a chapter entitled "A Magnet Attracting: A Waif Amid Forces", which displays Carrie moving through a world in which human attachments seem irrelevant, but in a field abundant with sensual, mechanical, material and economic energy. In the book, in naturalist fashion, people are types, instances, representatives of tendencies, processes or institutions, cases of something rather than individuals. On the other hand, what is missing in them is deeply embodied in things. Carrie is seduced by Drouet, but the real seducer is the city, which has "its cunning wiles, no less than the infinitely smaller and more human tempter. There are large forces which allure with all the soulfulness of expression possible in the most cultured human. . . . Half the undoing of the unsophisticated and natural mind is accomplished by forces wholly superhuman." This animation of the material world continues: the city is a "giant magnet", a "wonder", a dynamo of energy, and in its force-field human agents respond kinetically to its powers. So, while Hurstwood, who seduces Carrie next, is just "an interesting character after his kind", the things that really speak to Carrie, in the "voice of the so-called inanimate", are things, the clothes and goods of the material realm which meet desire with desire.

INDEED in Dreiser's world consciousness itself seems to have shifted its centre; things have voices, while the mind becomes an existential mechanism, a "clock of thought"—as in the scene where Hurstwood stands before the safe, and the machine and chance make his choice of life for him. Active energy lies in the material world, and in its vigorous excess individuals become moving entropic forces, rocking, like Carrie in her rocking chair at the novel's end, in Adams's entropic universe. So original is all this that Dreiser's novel becomes a text of naturalist expressionism, a work of distinctive American modernism. It is certainly to be distinguished from the more conventional forms of naturalism that were abundant after the turn of the century, when writers like Upton Sinclair applied the mode to progressive, muck-raking causes, or preoccupied themselves, like Jack London, with the Darwinian struggles of the wild. *Sister Carrie* is a formally experimental novel in a way those works are not, a book about the transfiguration of modern consciousness, drawing on naturalist rhetoric and techniques, but making it into far more than a form of radical reportage. Some of Dreiser's later work loses touch with this originality, but it is possible to see in it a prospect for an inventive new mode of the novel—not entirely remote from, for example, the more conspicuously experimental work of Gertrude Stein.

FOR IN ONE SENSE Gertrude Stein's work was about the overthrow of naturalism, and the remaking of the novel into a more elusive 20th-century form: "I was there to kill what was not dead, the nineteenth century which was so sure of evolution and prayers", she said. The modernism she went to Europe to pursue was a new "composition", a product of the "new space-time continuum", the modern multiverse that she, like Adams, dated from the turn of the century ("So the twentieth century had come it began in 1901", she said). It was true, as she made clear in her "cubist" novel *The Making of Americans* (written 1906–8, published 1925), that the new space-time continuum and the new consciousness were to be found in the United States; but to create its form and meanings one needed an avant-garde art environment, which is why Americans needed

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Paris to do their natural work ("Of course they all came to France a great many to paint pictures and naturally they could not do that at home, or write they could not do that at home either, they could be dentists at home"). She needed Post-Impressionism and Cubism from Paris to direct her intentions; and yet she was also right to suggest that those intentions were American, and shaped by an intellectual environment not entirely remote from Dreiser's.

For Stein, too, was a product of the American intellectual ferment. Born in Allegheny, Pennsylvania, of German Jewish background, she had travelled in Europe as a child, but her main intellectual forcing ground was the Harvard Annex, now Radcliffe College, where she studied in a climate where the social Darwinism of much American thought was giving way to a new view of self and man's position in the universe. She found there a group of original minds, centred on William James, who were concerned with experimental psychology, and were, in effect, attempting a revaluation of the whole possibility of significant action in a changing world. Like Pierce, Royce, Santayana and Dewey, James was re-evaluating the Darwinian image of man by emphasising that the relationship between the mind and its object can never be static or contemplative, but must be part of a developing flux. Conclusions can never be fixed once and for all, but are constantly under "pragmatic" test. The yearning to pass beyond stifling self-consciousness and hyperaesthesia is a potent element in pragmatism; when James spoke of consciousness as "a river or a stream", and so gave us one of our most useful modern literary critical phrases, he was emphasising the transitivity of being. Thus the laboratory experiments Stein engaged in at Harvard contained a deep concern with the relationship between behaviourism and action; and it was this path beyond behaviourism, which none the less contained many behaviourist assumptions (hence her concern with automatic writing, the tropic rhythms of remembering, and the nature of the collectivity of consciousness), that directed her work in modernist Paris.

So, sitting under a Cezanne, at 27 rue de Fleurus, between 1904 and 1906, she took a Flaubert text, *Trois Contes*, and attempted to apply to it the principles of new composition, defining her idea of the continuous present, which she claimed as the "first definite step away from the nineteenth and into the twentieth century in literature." As much of her work would, the book that emerged, *Three Lives*, displays strong naturalist and behaviourist constituents. Its subject is the limited lives of a group of servant girls, and it is in her portrait of the black servant Melanctha that she uses her famous "continuous present", but on a strong behaviourist principle: this is how Melanctha perceives. None the less it was a crucial step that,

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reinforced by the example of the Cubist painters, disintegrating the subject and pluralising perception of it, led her toward abstraction—a path that involved the defeat of the realist noun, the destruction of chronological ordering in narrative, the dissolution of the causal principle of "remembering" as a fundamental basis of fiction, and the replacement of the conventional narrative past tense by that "continuous present."

Stein's work was in fact an amalgam of American preoccupations and new European forms; and it developed a new concept of modern fiction based on a belief that there was an historical change in consciousness, which had changed the task of the arts. The change was in the surrounding "composition"; and "the composition in which we live makes the art we see or hear." As a writer of prose, Stein had little interest in exploring the historical forces *behind* that new composition; hence, unlike other modernist writers with whom she is often compared, she does little in her work to explore or locate the crisis of perception or structure the form appears to enact. Her devotion is to the nature of sensation and relation within the work itself, in a time when a single unitary reality was no longer available. It was Americans who knew that, and European experimentalists who had found the appropriate aesthetic equivalents. And so, like Ezra Pound in London, she felt the times were ripe for a merger, and sought to clinch the contract between modernism and Americanism. But it was to take some time for Americans back home to see the relevance of it.

INDEED, IT HAD to wait to the time of my third exhibition, which is of rather a different kind, and not only because Henry Adams was absent from it. In 1913, under the sponsorship of the Association of American Painters and Sculptors, a notable exhibition of paintings appeared in New York, and then went on to Chicago and Boston. The Armory Show was notable in two respects. It brought the American public face to face, for the first time, with the experimental movements in painting that had been developing in Europe in the first decade of the century, the paintings, often, that Stein had been seeing and buying: Fauvism, Cubism, Futurism, Expressionism. But it set these side by side with the work of the American naturalist painters of the "Ashcan School", creating an interesting juxtaposition of two views of the modern. Much of the response to the show was ribald, and Marcel Duchamp's "Nude Descending a Staircase", a kinetic semi-abstraction, excited particular ridicule. In Chicago a copy of Matisse's "Blue Nude" was burned by art students, but, as anyone who has visited the Art Institute there will know, the Chicago of 1913 was already moving toward being an art-city of sorts, and the show had everywhere a significant impact.

It came to an America of increasingly radical mood. In 1912 the three candidates in the Presidential election had all offered a version of the Progressive ticket; and radical political causes were strong. Bohemia was active in Greenwich Village and elsewhere, and in 1912 in Chicago Harriet Monroe had started *Poetry* magazine, with Ezra Pound as foreign correspondent, introducing, rather against Miss Monroe's will, the new tendencies of European poetry, including T. S. Eliot and of course his own movement, Imagism. *Poetry* was a magazine in contention, between Pound's Europeanised modernism and Harriet Monroe's version of mid-American experimentalism, which was represented by new poets like Carl Sandburg and Vachel Lindsay. What appeared in *Poetry* was thus much the same contention as appeared in the Armory Show, where Matisse and Duchamp hung with American naturalism. Thus two versions of modern experimental art seemed in dispute with each other. But the message of neo-abstraction and vitalism was not lost on Americans who had been hearing of the significance of Freud, Bergson and Sorel. As it happened Miss Stein's *Tender Buttons* appeared in the same year, to affect and influence a number of young writers, amongst them another Chicago author, Sherwood Anderson. Indeed, as Mabel Dodge Luhan, a somewhat partial witness, since she was a friend of Miss Stein's and the subject of one of her portraits, put it: "Gertrude Stein was born at the Armory Show."

"Looking back on it now", Luhan was also famously to say in her autobiography *Movers and Shakers*, "it seems as though everywhere, in that year of 1913, barriers went down and people reached each other who had never been in touch before; there were all sorts of new ways to communicate as well as new communications. The new spirit was abroad and swept us all together." It is conventional to read a totally new mood emerging in American culture at this time, and it is easy to overemphasise it and overlook the fact that much of it had been evolving since the 1890s. None the less there was a new generation suddenly in evidence: writers like Pound, Eliot, Robert Frost, William Carlos Williams, Wallace Stevens, Marianne Moore, Edgar Lee Masters, Vachel Lindsay, Carl Sandburg, Randolph Bourne, Van Wyck Brooks, Eugene O'Neill, and Sherwood Anderson were suddenly on the scene, and urging a radical new sense of art's nature and function. They expressed themselves in the avant-garde way, through the new little magazines that appeared in equally striking numbers to present them, and they displayed the impact of the new theories and tendencies which had been growing up as a hidden

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undercurrent behind the arts of progressive naturalism. Many, like Williams and Stevens, resisted a direct contact with Europe, but the penetration was there none the less; in Williams's hard image, in Stevens's dandyism, there is an unmistakable European presence.

It was largely in poetry that the new experiment expressed itself, but there were prose-writers, above all Anderson, who voiced the appeal of the new tradition. Anderson wrote of the Middle-Western American subject, and he showed the strong influence of naturalism. Yet not only did he recognise the significance of Stein's *Tender Buttons*, finding there a bareness of composition, a selective formal principle, and a concern with language which was vital "for the artist who happens to work with words as his material", but he increasingly began to identify the nature of his own avant-gardism and bohemianism; it was, after all, for art that he had walked out of the paint factory, for art that he had come to the big city. So, in Anderson's work over the next few years, we can see a progressive thinning of the naturalist surface, a rising aestheticism and formalism, clearly evident in the triumph of *Winesburg, Ohio* (1919), which forms a curious Middle-Western parallel to that modernist classic of linked short stories, Joyce's *Dubliners*. It is not the city in paralysis, but the small heartland town; it is not a Catholic society, but one of American Puritanism. Yet there is the same grotesquerie, and the same need for epiphany, an unspoken centre that calls for an utterance. And the utterance calls for an artist, an artist as a young man, George Willard, *and* a master artist, who possesses the formal means of revelation. That artist needs a more than naturalist text, one that will speak not only of social repressions but of the secret of the unspoken and the unrevealed, and who will forge the new artistic object, find the means of art's transcendence. And the revelation will come from the art work itself, in the transcendent image, the revealed form. And it was that outreach toward form and symbol that made Anderson, like Stein herself, a guru for the Twenties, the mentor of the writers to come, above all for Faulkner, Fitzgerald, and even his bitter parodist Ernest Hemingway. For those writers, it was naturalism mitigated, transfigured by a new sense of form and language, that was to transform the American novel itself, and bring it within the conspectus of modernism.

IT SEEMS REASONABLE to say that the fourth fundamental shift in the development of American writing was begun not by an exhibition but by a war, the World War which brought more Americans to Europe than art ever had and which

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served in both the European and the American imagination as a fundamental point of transition. It was, indeed, largely out of the young generation who had experienced the War at first hand, and whose first novels were about the War, that the extraordinary burst of fictional experimentalism came which was to look something like a second American Renaissance. Scott Fitzgerald, Ernest Hemingway, William Faulkner, John Dos Passos and e. e. cummings were all, in their different ways, to be shaped, affected, directed by the double experience of war and Europe, indeed to see that war as itself a futurist enterprise which enforced a changed conception of history, experience, language and art. The war was modernity itself, as wound and outrage, and it fed and sharpened the generational sense of these new novelists, for whom modernity appeared not simply a form or a changed state of consciousness but a condition—a condition of shaken faith, shaken confidence, broken culture, historical fragmentation. It was a marker of modernisation that permitted no return; and as, over the Twenties, America itself modernised rapidly through the economic boom, it modernised itself closer to that fragile exposure that those who had been to the battlefield had already seen.

But that condition required an appropriate style, and the making of the style of the modern, in life as well as art, became the great preoccupation of the American Twenties. So, to a great degree, the enterprise of the new American novelists was devoted to exploring the condition of the modern in life itself, discerning the structures it imposed on man's experience, and then transliterating that into a new, reduced language of art. The heroes and heroines of the American novel of the 1920s consume style, in the decadent fashion, as much as do their creators. But decadence, after a fashion, was back—in the world of the beautiful and damned, of the lost generation, of oblique sexual angles and androgynies, wounded and febrile sensibilities. Both progressivism and the historical world itself seemed discredited, lost in senselessness, in the failure of Wilson's League of Nations, and the base commercial puritanism of an America committed to corporate capitalism and pure business. Naturalism survived no longer as a progressive discourse, but as a mode for portraying the ironic world of indifference and slaughter—the world of Ernest Hemingway's "Natural History of the Dead"—against which was set the need for a solitary, existential self-realisation.

During the 1920s, the naturalist text indeed comes under pressure, from the techniques of symbolism, expressionism, collage and montage. In 1925, the extraordinary experimental year that saw publication of Gertrude Stein's *The Making of Americans*, Sherwood Anderson's *Dark Laughter*, and Hemingway's *In Our Time*, Dos Passos published *Manhattan Transfer*, a novel of the novel city in which the naturalist environment of system and process dissolves into transience and glimpsed relations. Naturalism was represented that year by Dreiser's *An American Tragedy*, which interestingly contrasts with another key book of the year, Fitzgerald's *The Great Gatsby*, the book in which the image of the apocalyptic city generates a dream of symbolic transcendence, the dream embodied, indeed, by Gatsby himself. Two stories of young men lured and corrupted by the American dream of success, and caught in impossible sexual relationships which end with their deaths, Dreiser's pursues the classic naturalist method, amassing, documenting, seeking to generate outrage and reform. Fitzgerald, on the other hand, avoids following the tracks of causation, insists on the suspension of judgment, generates an extraordinary surreality, and plays the historical against a timeless world in the spirit of decadent symbolism.

With history and politics, naturalism and realism failing, the spirit of the 1920s indeed pointed firmly in the avant-garde direction, one reason for the mass expatriation to Paris, as artists withdrew from the world of puritanism and prohibition, Babbittry and the booboisie, toward bohemia and Paris. Paris meant three things: a general search for new style, an aesthetic release from the naturalist view of art; an alternative to the new isolationism and cultural nostalgia of the commercial American 1920s; and an encounter with a new, exposed condition of man, starkly revealed in the ruined and disturbed spirit of post-War Europe. Post-War and decadent, Paris's modernity now lay not only in its radical art-styles—Joyce's verbal revolution, Stein's cubist prose, Proust's new flow of consciousness, Pound's kinetic image—but in its febrile life-style, its behavioural modernity. Thus the American writers may have learned something from the expatriate gurus there to give instruction, like Stein, Joyce, Pound and Ford Madox Ford, but they learned selectively, instinctively seeking out those elements that applied to American conditions. Indeed modernism often became a way of looking from an aesthetic distance on lost possibilities, the America of the deep woods or the green world dissolving under modern commercialism. But it also offered a sensibility and style that could encounter the sense of historical dislocation, of exposed modernity, of overwhelming new metropolitanism, that was modern America.

BY THE END of the 1920s, the mood changed. Politics came back, in radical form; the Great Crash stopped the cheques that supported bohemia; some experimental writers even discovered

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that the American booboisie had granted them success. But by now modernism was inside American culture. Like Freud and Jung, Picasso and Picabia, it seemed a natural American style. And when, in the 1930s, the political disorder and persecution of Europe drove many European modernists to the United States, they indeed found that Stein's prophecy that progressive modernism was basically American had more or less come true. It had lost much of its avant-garde outrage, become an accessible mode of expression; as Harry Levin has said, the essential step from Picasso to apartment houses called the Picasso had been taken.

Faith & Uncertainty

Recent Novels—By A. N. Wilson

Christ died to open Heaven's gates to sinners, but He was the first historical character to speak of Hell. And in giving St Peter the keys of the Kingdom, Our Lord also gave the Apostle power to bind the sins of the wayward and to condemn them to eternal perdition.

No one has ever exploited the fictitious possibilities of these sombre traditions more ingeniously than Graham Greene. *The Power and the Glory, Brighton Rock, The End of the Affair*, and, above all, *The Heart of the Matter* derived their terrifying power from the clear sense that human beings have been given the freedom to condemn themselves to eternal torment. Critics who fail to understand Mr Greene's religion have tended to describe these earlier books as though Mr Greene saw human life as a cruel moral obstacle race, presided over by a sadistic Deity, only too happy to snatch the likes of Pinkie and Scobie into the fires of Hell. Mr Greene, by the same token, has been seen as a theological gambler, deriving a positive thrill, as a narrator, from the notion that human behaviour could, on occasion, be not merely misguided, but damnable. But in those dark tales there lurked a fine sense that whatever evil a man did, the grace and mercy of God was greater. "We must hope", says the priest in the confessional to Rose at the end of *Brighton Rock*. And, after Scobie's suicide in *The Heart of the Matter*, when his wife almost gloatingly insists that he has been damned, she is upbraided by Father Rank.

> "For goodness sake, Mrs Scobie, don't imagine you—or I—know a thing about God's mercy."
>
> "The Church says. . . ."
>
> "I know the Church says. The Church knows all the rules. But it doesn't know what goes on in a single human heart."

It has to be said that these final plaintive pieces of optimistic scepticism do little to lighten the prevailing gloom of the moral universe Mr Greene has depicted. Since those remarkable theological novels were written, much has changed. As Catholics and non-Catholics alike are encouraged to munch the sacrament at each other's altars, Scobie's predicament—risking damnation by making an unworthy communion—seems rather remote.

Meanwhile, Mr Greene's genius has flowered in all kinds of directions. He has revealed himself as sympathetic to the agnostic position, and to the Marxists, traditional enemies of Catholicism; and we have seen, in such short stories as "A Shocking Accident" and the novel *Travels with My Aunt*, that he can be a supremely comic writer, as well as the analyst of the darker pits of moral theology. He himself used to divide his work into "entertainments" (by which he meant his thrillers) and his "serious" novels. But since the blossoming of the humorous Greene novels, the real division in his work seems to be between the benign warmth of the human comedies and the terrible darkness of his theology. Thus, there was no more stylish "entertainment" than his spy story *The Human Factor*. Few of his novels have contained a more dreadful sense of the power of evil. And yet, by stark contrast, few have been more hilarious.

This is not really a true division, however. In his latest novel, *Monsignor Quixote*,[1] we witness a marriage between the master of the absurd whom we have come to appreciate in the later books, and the distinctively intelligent moral theologian who depicted the death of Scobie. We find an encounter, in the lightest and most felicitous epigrammatic vein, between Mr Greene's political and religious concerns. It is foolish to talk of this or that book being Mr Greene's "best"—in a seemingly inexhaustible treasure-house, who can say which is the most magnificent jewel? But a strong case could be made for believing that *Monsignor Quixote* is Graham Greene's crowning

[1] *Monsignor Quixote*. By Graham Greene. Bodley Head, £5.95.

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achievement: the richest, funniest, cleverest, and the most touching book that he has ever written.

DON QUIXOTE is the parish priest of El Toboso, a small village in La Mancha. "How can he be descended from a fictional character?" asks his testy and officious bishop, the first of many surreal touches in the picaresque journey of our hero. His own diocesan may not like him, but he inadvertently places a visiting Italian bishop in his debt when that dignitary, on holiday in Valencia, is stranded without petrol for his Mercedes. Not only can the unshaven priest provide his distinguished visitor with petrol; he also shares with him his luncheon; and to the parched taste of the pontiff the rough Spanish wine tastes like nectar, while the horsemeat steak (prepared by Don Quixote's loyal housekeeper Teresa) is the most delicious meat which has ever passed his lips. On his return to Italy, the foreign bishop arranges that Don Quixote should be made a monsignor by the Holy Father. Quixote's own bishop greets the promotion of his wayward subordinate with contempt and sends a severe young priest to take his place in the parish while the monsignor takes a holiday.

The communist mayor of El Toboso, Zancas, has recently been defeated in the local elections, and he proposes that he and the priest should make their journey together. The monsignor is hesitant at first, but there is an obvious appropriateness about the suggestion. For, just as the monsignor is descended from Cervantes's Knight of the Woeful Countenance, so Zancas is the same surname as Sancho Panza in the old tale. And so they set out together, at first a seemingly ill-fadged pair of half-friends, with only the love of wine in common, to tilt at the windmills which beset their path in this modern picaresque. They are conveyed in the priest's ancient motor, a Seat 600 which he calls, inevitably, Rocinante. Their partnership provides one of the most sprightly and provocative series of conversations in modern literature.

It was the heroine of *The End of the Affair* who "caught belief like a disease." Sancho presents the opposite end of the process. He introduces the guileless priest to vodka, and Quixote remarks wistfully that its effects wear off. "So does belief", says Sancho. "Why do you think that?" "It's life, father, at its dirty work. Belief dies away like the desire for a woman. I doubt if you are an exception to the general rule."

Sancho is right, but only up to a point. Quixote's belief in the love and mercy of God has made him lose faith in the doctrines of Hell. But the mayor is to discover that the monsignor is indeed an exception to every "general rule" you could think of, particularly those general rules devised by moral theologians and canon lawyers. For he is an innocent, almost a Chestertonian character. (It never has occurred to him that he has been eating horsemeat for years.)

The adventures of Quixote and Sancho on the road together become increasingly hilarious, from the moment when they stop in Madrid at an expensive ecclesiastical outfitters to buy some nylon socks of monsignorial purple. Perhaps the scene which best displays the monsignor's innocency of heart is when his Communist friend tricks him into staying in a place he knows in Salamanca. The priest is impressed by the hostelry. It has a large staff of charming young women, and the bedroom is well-appointed with a bidet (mistaken by the monsignor for a foot-bath) and champagne in an ice-bucket.

> "Father Quixote had always been inquisitive in small ways. His greatest temptation in the confessional box was to ask unnecessary and even irrelevant questions. Now he couldn't resist opening a little square envelope which was lying on Sancho's bedside table—it made him think of his childhood and the tiny letters his mother would sometimes leave for him to read before sleep.
>
> There was an explosion, the cork cracked against the wall, and a fountain of champagne missed the glass. Sancho swore and turned. 'What on earth are you doing, father?'
>
> Father Quixote was blowing up a sausage-shaped balloon. He squeezed the end with his fingers. 'How do you keep the air in?' he asked. 'Surely there should be some sort of nozzle?' He began to blow again and the balloon exploded, less loudly though more sharply than the champagne bottle. 'Oh dear, I'm so sorry, Sancho, I didn't mean to break your balloon. Was it a gift for a child?'
>
> 'No father, it was a gift for the girl who brought the champagne.' . . ."

It goes without saying that the monsignorial antics are displeasing to his bishop. There is a perfectly innocent explanation for why Quixote has been in a brothel; just as there are equally innocent explanations for why he has been seen coming out of a pornographic film called *The Maiden's Prayer* (he was *laughing*), why he has offered help to an escaped criminal, and why he has allowed his Communist friend to try on his clerical collar, thus leading to a potentially dangerous case of mistaken identity. But innocent explanations are not plausible to worldly ears like the bishop's and he suspends Monsignor Quixote until he can get him locked in an asylum. It is then that the second part of the priest's adventures begins. If the first part was a picaresque romp, the second turns out to be a journey towards Calvary. For, when he comes to a country church where the poor are being encour-

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aged to buy forgiveness of their sins by pinning paper money to an image of Our Lady, Quixote's righteous anger makes him interrupt the procession and accuse the parish priest of blasphemy.

"We all make cruel parodies of what we intend", as Sancho has remarked at an earlier stage of the journey. And Monsignor Quixote's attempt to drive the money-changers from the Temple goes badly wrong. This remains, after all, a comic novel. The gallant and chivalrous Quixote is struck in the face with a thurible, but by accident. The Bishop and the police are on his trail, and it is only with difficulty that Sancho manages to find sanctuary for him in the Trappist monastery of Osera.

IT IS HERE that the story reaches its poignant climax. For, walking in his sleep, Monsignor Quixote blunders his way into the monastery church, followed by an anxious guestmaster, an American don who happens to be staying at Osera, and by the companion of his adventures, Sancho. All three men are afraid to wake the somnambulant cleric. They do not even know whether he *is* sleep-walking or whether he has lost his reason. But standing at the altar he hastily mutters the words of the old Latin mass. There is no bread, and no wine, but, as someone asks afterwards, "Do you think it's more difficult to turn empty air into wine than wine into blood?" Holding the invisible Host, the celebrant advances towards his atheistical Communist friend and says 'You must kneel, *companero*." Having dispensed this mysterious parody of a sacrament to his friend, Monsignor Quixote sinks back; his heart stops beating, and he goes to rejoin his ancestor.

Scobie, in *The Heart of the Matter*, deliberately ate his own damnation. Monsignor Quixote, by presenting an invisible sacrament to his erring friend, seems to have sidetracked the dangers of hell and offered only the heavenly food of love. Sancho is puzzled by his own feelings when the old priest dies. "Why is it that the hate of a man—even of a man like Franco—dies with his death, and yet love, the love which he had begun to feel for Father Quixote, seemed now to live and grow in spite of the final separation and the final silence."

Sancho is a Communist in spite of the Politburo. Quixote is a Catholic in spite of the Curia. He draws his inspiration not from his officious bishop, nor from the Opus Dei, nor from the rigid legalism of the moral theologians. One of the volumes which the two friends peruse on their journey is the work of a German moral theologian of the old school called Hone, who knows all the answers to everything: even what to do when baptising a two-headed monster ("You must strike an

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average and baptise one head absolutely and the other conditionally"). As Quixote knows, this sort of nonsense is not the heart of Catholicism. His great ancestor had been guided by the old books of romance and chivalry like Amadis de Gaul. The modern Don Quixote still clings to the old works of spiritual piety: de Caussade, St Francis de Sales, and St Augustine. Sancho has loved many women. Quixote has a special place in his heart for a French girl called Mlle Martin. She was, of course, St Thérèse of Lisieux, who devised a simple pattern of spirituality which she called her little way of love.

IT IS DIFFICULT TO CONVEY the richness of *Monsignor Quixote* simply by writing about it. It is comic, and pathetic, and wonderfully interesting. But it would hardly be an exaggeration to add that it is a religious masterpiece. Mr Greene did not invent the stern old religion of his early novels. It was in a sermon of Ronald Knox that the phrase occurred: "When we get to heaven, St Peter will not ask us whether we have been good or bad; merely whether we have RC stamped on our identity disc." Mr Greene now says that he dislikes *The End of the Affair* and *The Heart of the Matter*, but they do crystallise a certain type of spirituality which was unquestionably real; a religion which any decent person would be damned rather than accept, for it made such a blasphemous travesty of God's love and justice. Monsignor Quixote's religion, on the other hand, which he entertains in spite of the Curia, is something worth living and dying for. It is a religion summed up in the saying "Blessed are the pure in heart."

ALICE THOMAS ELLIS has recently published her third novel, *The 27th Kingdom*.[2] The hallmark of this delightful book's comedy is the juxtaposition of theological verities with the most banal domestic preoccupations:

> "Aunt Irene shivered. It had occurred to her the other day in church that possibly it was only the good who were *able* to believe in God—that the wicked, being hideously narcissistic, could see only themselves reflected in whatever they looked upon; could believe only in their own desires and inadequacies, were quite incapable of seeing the truth of a different person or deity.
>
> Like people who took sugar in their tea, or people cross-eyed and dribbling with lust. Such people when told that other people preferred their tea unsweetened, or liked to sleep alone, simply did not believe it—were quite *unable* to believe it."

Her subjects occupy much of the territory, spiritual and geographical, of an early Iris Murdoch novel; that is to say, we have her Chelsea in the 1950s, a household presided over by an eccentric refugee lady (Aunt Irene) and crammed with depressives, sexual deviants, a black postulant from a convent; there is a splendidly sympathetic atmosphere of alcoholic, sexual, and theological confusion. But, if Iris Murdoch's crowded canvases are paintings by Frith, *The 27th Kingdom* is a water-colour sketch by a mistress of caricature.

The novel centres around the church of the Holy Redeemer in Cheyne Row, where one of Sir Thomas More's martyred vertebrae was contained in a reliquary. " 'Pray for us', panted Aunt Irene, to this leading member of an earlier Chelsea set."

Being set in the 1950s, it belongs firmly to the era of miracles. Valentine, the black postulant, who has temporarily left her convent to take up residence in Aunt Irene's house, is gifted with the power of levitation. She is less an innocent, like Monsignor Quixote, than a saint, like Padre Pio, a peculiar freak of supernature. Yet her appearance at the house and the effect she has on all the bizarre characters in Aunt Irene's menagerie seemed to me entirely plausible. All these characters are deftly, sympathetically, hilariously drawn; my only criticism of the book was that the ending (which I of course do not reveal) is too neat and too mannered. The dotty world of *The 27th Kingdom* is so brilliantly evoked that I do not think it needed a formal, still less a melodramatic, still less a violent ending of the sort with which we are presented. But it is Alice Thomas Ellis's novel—and her best.

ELIZABETH NORTH is a very different sort of novelist, but in her way no less accomplished. It never seems to me that reviewers quite get her right or give her her due. Like Alice Thomas Ellis, she has harked back to the 1950s for some of her better comic effects in the past (*Everything in the Garden*), but *Ancient Enemies*,[3] her latest story, is relentlessly modern. Aunt Irene, in the Alice Thomas Ellis novel, buzzes with the grotesquerie of religious certitude. Petra, the heroine and narrator of Mrs North's novel, is caught up in a depressing domestic crisis (her mother's lover has eloped) which shakes up her already vague sense of the spiritual and moral verities.

At Petra's sixth-form college, where she is studying for English A-level with the personable Mr Forbes, this puzzlement is aired in class discussion.

[2] *The 27th Kingdom*. By ALICE THOMAS ELLIS. Duckworth, £7.95.

[3] *Ancient Enemies*. By ELIZABETH NORTH. Cape, £6.95.

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"'People die at the end of tragedies', said Mr Forbes, 'and marry at the end of comedies—or at least pair off.' 'Why does it have to be either?' I said."

Petra herself finds this contrast too stark.

"'I was only trying to say', I said, 'that life could be neither. It could be like cock-up and conspiracy. I mean cock-up or conspiracy', and I went on about the prime mover and all the arguments we'd had at home."

Ancient Enemies is an extraordinary achievement. I was completely engrossed in Petra's story. And she is such a likeable heroine: so rare nowadays. She is about the age of a Jane Austen heroine, and, like so many of them, she lives in Hampshire. Like Elizabeth Bennett or Catherine Morland, she is wandering between two worlds, no longer entirely a child, but still very far from being grown-up. The circumstances of her life, of course, are not remotely Jane Austenish. Her mother has been having a love affair; Petra herself more than mildly fancies Mr Forbes, the English teacher; and yet her Thelwellish concerns about her pony Troy really occupy as much of her emotional attention as the emergent matters of sex (she has had an abortion), dope, A-levels, and worry about the grown-ups.

As soon as a novelist decides to tell a story in the first person they abandon any claim to be inclusive. First-person narrative inevitably dulls the edge of ambiguity and limits the intrusive omniscience which the artifice of the third-person narrator allows. Moreover, when the speaker's idiom is caricatured and imitated throughout, the interest of the reader shifts away from the story itself to the method of narration, as an artifice. The pitfalls are obvious. One invariably starts to pick holes. For instance, Petra says, "Thinking about blokes I've had and things that have happened, there's this girl I know. . . ." Would she then go on to say, "She has a boy friend and always takes him home to bed with her and *her parents are agreeable*?" (My italics.) Or, describing her friend Liz—"She is, I suppose, good-looking in a cold way. I've always guessed that she's lesbian and considered, *somewhat intolerantly*, this to be a good reason for avoiding her."

Agreeable, and *somewhat intolerantly* are, I guess, Mrs North's words and not Petra's. But it is curmudgeonly to pick them out, for on the whole, she triumphantly succeeds in capturing a wholly plausible and consistent Petra. If such a thing is imaginable, it is a sort of English middle-class *Catcher in the Rye*. The book is a delight from the first page to the last; poignant, without being soppy; funny without being whimsical. One never feels for an instant that Mrs North is guying or patronising her adolescent heroine; yet Petra is

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a gloriously comic creature. We savour her story not primarily because we want to know what will happen next but because, like her common-law "stepfather" Henry, her uncle Patrick, and the hilariously moth-eaten Mr Forbes (for whom Petra babysits while his wife is in hospital giving birth to twins), we find it impossible not to like her. Mrs North has been bold enough not to spoil her story with melodrama or farce. The drama unfolds in a series of trivial conversations, visits to boutiques, walks back from *King Lear* classes or chats in the kitchen. I also loved her cool, putatively lesbian, friend Liz:

> " 'Sex *is* the strongest passion known to human beings, isn't it', said Liz, reminding me of how Forbes said that was a quote of Hardy's somewhere. 'If you like that sort of thing', she said."

"NOTHING ODD WILL DO LONG." One often thinks of Dr Johnson's famous remark when reading fiction, even going on to wonder whether he was not entirely right in his judgment that "*Tristram Shandy* did not last."

My tastes in fiction are so largely "middlebrow" that I am the worst possible judge of a multi-talented innovator like Anthony Burgess. All his novels are hectically stylish, but *The End of the World News*[4] is not the best of them. It is presented almost apologetically by John B. Wilson BA (Mr Burgess's "real name") as the first published posthumous work of an unknown author, which he claims to have found in a carrier bag from an Italian supermarket. In the preface we are reminded that President Carter was seen watching three television programmes at once, and *The End of the World News* requires a similar hexoptical energy on the part of the reader. It is really three quite different stories. One of them is a rather vivid fictionalised life of Sigmund Freud, which, had it stood on its own, would have made a very striking and sympathetic historical novel. Another is an extraordinarily feeble script for a Broadway musical based on Trotsky's visit to America. I quote one of the lyrics to give some idea of its flavour. Olga, a New York Trotskyite, sings:

> *The new world hasn't been built yet,*
> *For its builders don't have much luck.*
> *The capitalistic flowers*
> *Have not begun to wilt yet,*
> *The proletarian hour's*
> *Not struck.*

The third strand of the narrative is set in the future and is a piece of science fiction. The planet earth is about to be crushed by "the dreaded Lynx", an intruder from a distant galaxy. At the end of this rag-bag, the whole narrative is discussed by a seminar of American students, again set in the future. They agree that the science fiction is completely "real" but they find the "myths" of Freud and Trotsky quite unbelievable.

Lively as the book undoubtedly is, it was wasted on me. It seemed impossible not to feel that Mr Burgess had not served up three half-finished books from his desk drawer, all wildly disparate in character and stirred together carelessly. The idea that the various strands of this narrative relate to one another is little more than a literary confidence trick. Even if one blocks one's ears to the siren common sense of Dr Johnson, it is difficult not to feel that Dickens's Mr Turveydrop knew a thing or two about art: "Polish, polish, polish!"

The End of the World News is almost insolently unpolished. Doubtless, had it been edited or reworked it could have presented us with interesting comments on the nature of illusion and reality. The seminar at the end is all too plausible. We live in a world where whole schools of literary critics have decided, and are teaching the gullible young to believe, that it is impossible to determine the "verisimilitude" of a "text." And Frank Kermode, one of the cleverest living critics, has expounded this view in his book *The Genesis of Secrecy*: there is no way of telling, according to this view, whether a narrative is "true" or not. Nor can we distinguish, to Professor Kermode's satisfaction, between historians, novelists and evangelists. Henry James and St Mark were apparently up to the same sort of game. The commonsense answer—"But St Mark believed himself to be describing things which had actually taken place"—would be howled down on all sides; no one more anxious to bay and mock than New Testament scholars in holy orders.

PERHAPS IT WAS SOME SUCH flight of Berkeleian scepticism which enabled this year's Booker Prize judges to reward Thomas Keneally with

[4] *The End of the World News*. By ANTHONY BURGESS. Hutchinson, £8.95.

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£10,000 for his enthralling narrative *Schindler's Ark*.[5] There can be no doubt that the story of Oskar Schindler is one of the more remarkable to emerge from the Second World War. A Sudeten German, he moved to Cracow in 1939 for purely commercial reasons. He was a swindler, a drunkard, and a womaniser. And yet, had he not been these things, he would not have been able to rescue hundreds of Jews from the concentration camps.

Keneally is quite understandably fascinated by this story. And he writes a very vivid book about it. But a narrative is all it *is*, laced with anecdote. "I have attempted to avoid all fiction . . . since fiction would debase the record", he writes, in his foreword. The story is so important to him that he has shrunk from the task of turning it into a novel.

Schindler is conceived as a very competent journalist would have conceived him, not as a novelist. There is nothing wrong with this. *Schindler's Ark* is not a novel. It is a highly competent, workaday piece of reportage. The feeling is therefore irresistible, not merely that it was odd to give it a prize for *fiction*, but, much more important, that it represents a great lost opportunity. Presented with the bare outline of Schindler's career and character, the reader finds it too odd to be fully comprehensible. He remains a two-dimensional character because Keneally describes him so realistically. Had he been a character in a Graham Greene fiction, Schindler might have seemed more real. And we might have come closer to understanding the fundamentally theological paradox of his nature: that all his petty vices were serviceable for the cause of good; that in the ghastly world Schindler inhabited with such a buccaneer mixture of heroism and the gambling instinct, good could grow out of evil.

[5] *Schindler's Ark*. By THOMAS KENEALLY. Hodder & Stoughton, £7.95.

The Dream Hunter

On John Berryman—By MARY ELLMANN

JOHN BERRYMAN was one of those poets who seem from the beginning to be maimed, and yet manage to externalise their private hurts to the point that they become representative. To make this possible he attached great importance to his dreams; he spent a good deal of time analysing them himself, or telling them to analysts. Not by accident, he wrote as his principal work 385 "dream songs", published in two volumes. These, as he insisted, were not confessional, though as John Haffenden shows in *The Life of John Berryman*,[1] they are full of autobiographical incident. The actuality is mixed up with fantasy about it, and both ingredients are stylised with technical dexterity into several levels of diction and strictly maintained six-line stanzas.

Berryman's wounds were deep and incurable. Even before his birth the prognosis would have been troubled. His mother claimed that his father raped her, then blackmailed her into marrying him. The father's name was not Berryman but John Allyn Smith. When the son was twelve, Smith committed suicide by shooting himself on the front porch of their home. All his life Berryman saw his father in dream or daydream: "That mad drive wiped out my childhood", he said in Dream Song 143, and "I spit upon this dreadful banker's grave, / who shot his heart out in a Florida dawn" (Dream Song 384). In one burst of fantasy he imagined himself smashing his father's genitals. The reason for Smith's suicide was never clear to him, and he questioned his mother repeatedly about it. She was a clever woman, but could not tell the same story twice. Berryman at least briefly suspected that she had killed her husband. There was little that he did not suspect. Caught between hatred of his father and curiosity about him, between love of his mother and suspicion of her, he could not free his mind of either parent. When he wrote a life of Stephen Crane, he attributed to Crane the same feelings he had himself.

Very quickly after her husband's death, Mrs Smith, like Hamlet's mother, married again. Her second husband was John Angus Berryman, and so the boys' names were changed. John Berryman the poet regretted the change all his life. In 1947 he repeated his name 500 times as if by doing so he might find forgiveness for its adoption. He was far from accepting himself under either surname. The pattern of his life could hardly have been more turbulent. At the Kent School, to which his new father sent him, he was a misfit, at least initially all intellect when the school was all sport. One day, badgered beyond endurance by his classmates, he lay down on the railroad tracks before

[1] *The Life of John Berryman*. By JOHN HAFFENDEN. Routledge, £15.00.

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an incoming train, and it took three boys to pull him off. Haffenden, who is inclined to be severe, offers self-pity as a possible explanation, but surely to experience persecution warrants self-pity. A few hours later, Berryman managed to ward off the same boys with a promise of no further attempts at suicide. Haffenden calls this persuasion "emotional blackmail." It was scarcely that. At any rate, this attempt to end his life was the first of a considerable number that Berryman made. When he finally jumped off a bridge over the Mississippi at 57, his death seemed the fulfilment of a lifelong intention.

From Kent School Berryman went on to Columbia College and then won a scholarship for a year's study at Clare College, Cambridge. Lonely for a time, he slowly made friends and became engaged to an Englishwoman identified by Haffenden as "Beatrice." She visited him in New York, after he came back from England. But because of the imminence in 1938 of war, she returned to England. A long separation followed, and in 1941 Berryman met Eileen Mulligan (later Eileen Simpson). He wanted to marry her, so it was a mark of his goodness that he respected his engagement to Beatrice and was reluctant to break it. In 1942 Beatrice released him, and he was free to marry Eileen. A brief happiness followed for them both.

But Berryman was always tense, tense about religion, tense about art. As a boy he had been a Roman Catholic; with the change of fathers he gave up the Church, then later returned to it, then towards the end fell away again, though not without remorse. His early poetry suffered from being excessively absorptive; Yeats was the principal influence, at times almost crippling. Eventually Berryman broke away to evolve a style with interjections and telescoped phrases that out-rivalled Browning's. If imitation occurred it was parodic. No single style was allowed to persist without ironic qualification. The sense of his own incompleteness, and even incoherence, was swept into his verse and offered as a virtue rather than a defect. So in the Dream Songs the main character, Henry, talks of himself as Henry or Mr Bones, in the first, second, or third person, to a friend who is never named. Beyond Henry is the author, who is more than his suffering, laughing protagonist, and who shapes the passionate syntax and intensely organised stanzas.

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THE TALE THAT John Haffenden tells in this biography is the kind that makes the reader wince, like the record of Robert Lowell's life. There are so many breakdowns, so many peaks of excitement. Berryman said his poetry was intended "to terrify and comfort", but in John Haffenden's portrait terror is dominant. One reason for this is that he relies heavily on Berryman's journal, a record of deep gloom. Reading Eileen Simpson's *Poets in Their Youth*,[2] one realises that Berryman was not all melancholy, and Simpson serves as a useful antidote to Haffenden. Her marriage to him was the first of three, and all, including the third, exhausted themselves. Berryman had many other attachments, and while these too ended in violent disenchantment, at least one—with a woman called Lise—had breaths of enjoyment and exhilaration before the final blasting.

During most of his mature years, Berryman suffered from alcoholism, though it did not incapacitate him, except occasionally, for writing or teaching. He suffered also from psychoses or near-psychoses, including paranoia. What is surprising is

[2] *Poets in Their Youth: A Memoir*. By EILEEN SIMPSON. Faber & Faber, £10.50; Random House, $15.50.

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that, as Haffenden demonstrates, he had a great many warm friendships. Men took to him and so did women, often at great cost to their peace of mind. He numbered among his friends the leading writers of his time, Jarrell, Lowell, Schwartz, Blackmur, Tate, Bellow. Though he longed to be first among his peers, he was generous with his praise of others' accomplishments.

Haffenden regards Berryman as always frightened. Berryman thought of himself that way, though it must be said that to others he appeared more frightening than frightened. His celebrated arrogance put most people off, yet he could lay it aside when among people he relied on, and was then witty, eloquent, self-possessed. He was well read too, and prided himself on his scholarship and critical power. All his life he was at work on Shakespeare, and theorised about him endlessly. It is unfortunate that Haffenden has little to say about Berryman's ideas, when he is so compendious about personal weaknesses. The biography is clotted with incidents of Berryman's misbehaviour, and yet drunken Berryman, sex-obsessed Berryman, despondency-ridden Berryman brings book after book to completion. We long to see more of his mind and less of his body. Although Haffenden has written elsewhere of Berryman's verse, he has little to say about it here, where its polish and structure would greatly relieve the impression of immense confusion. He presents Berryman at his most fallible when we long to see him at his most effective.

Where Haffenden is severe, Eileen Simpson is indulgent; where he is awkward, she is light and graceful. We need his sober chronicle, we also need her amusing recollections. As Berryman's first wife, her emphasis is primarily upon him; through him she meets other young poets ("in their youth"). Knowing Berryman intimately, she modifies Haffenden's account—and all to the good. She admits his youthful defects and difficulties, yet conveys compensatory satisfactions. Later she weathered his affair with Lise. Throughout the marriage, and until his death, she remained a confidante. They were married only eleven years, but for that time she seems to have been a good wife, and a cheerful one. She also indicates that he tried to behave well, rejoices when he was virtuous, grieves at his lapses.

In the end, the poets all died "in their youth", a disconcerting comment on our times. But since they are now dead, Simpson can speak freely of them. Perhaps too freely, and yet the book is important for its biographical evidence. Though most of them came to tragic ends, Eileen Simpson shows that they had their dance.

The Pool

To carry daylight to the pool I walk
Myself in that direction, throwing off
Its veil of grey with my eyes, hurling back
Tall hillsides with each step, causing enough
Space on it for the sky. But as the sky
Glides up and stops in front of me, I stop
And look—Somehow my head is only
A blur itself on the water's edge, my face
Is darkened by the half-light of this place
. . . You could remove me just as easily.

I could change nature with no greater power
Than a short walk, and a switching of my gaze;
But I see now that my shape is nothing more
Than a shadow on this world, and its brief day dies.
I go back to a room where there is room
For just a mirror—another mirror
In which I make no difference. This one is deep,
And in it, stones and earth will not retreat
For movements of the head, or of the feet.
Nothing can alter there. And nothing keep.

Alan Brownjohn

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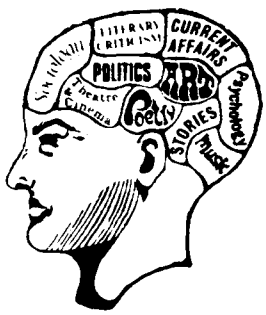
After Binet, Back to Galton

An IQ Revolution—By H. J. EYSENCK



MOST READERS of ENCOUNTER will be aware of the fact that in recent years there has been some little controversy regarding the status of intelligence testing, and in particular of the intelligence quotient (IQ). At least some of these polemics are based on myths which are hard to dispel, but, on the whole, it might be said that much of the argument is due to alternative views of the nature, determinants, and measurement of intelligence which existed right at the beginning of the scientific investigation of this concept.

Around the beginning of the century, these two points of view were advocated respectively by Sir Francis Galton, the English polymath, and by Alfred Binet, a French psychologist and educationalist. Galton put forward the theory that there was one, single, general factor of Intelligence, a universal cognitive ability which enabled a person to learn complex material readily, solve problems, and reason correctly. Binet, on the other hand, did not believe in the existence of such a universal mental ability at all. He thought of intelligence rather as the average of a number of separate or semi-separate abilities (like verbal ability, numerical ability, memory, suggestibility, etc.).

This was the first great division between these two men. The second related to the question of "inheritance." Galton believed that differences in intelligence were largely if not entirely due to genetic factors, whereas Binet stressed the importance of environmental, cultural and educational factors. This difference, like the first, still haunts psychologists and accounts for their diverse estimates of the results of Intelligence Testing.

A third great difference relates to the actual measurement of intelligence. Galton favoured direct physiological measures of this universal cognitive ability, and suggested (such devices as electroencephalographs, etc. were not available then) the use of "reaction-time measurement" as a very simple indicator of neurological functioning. Binet, on the other hand, insisted on the importance of "problem solving", the carrying-out of instructions of a complex character, knowledge of words, and other types of tasks which were clearly to some extent influenced by educational and social factors.

Binet won the day; and the type of test he constructed has essentially been imitated by all those who followed him. Realising that the tests he used were very "culture-bound", R. B. Cattell and others tried to construct more "culture-fair" tests, involving less educational information and knowledge. While they succeeded to some extent, the non-representational figures and diagrams they used still employ such concepts as right-angles, circles, and the like, which might not be as familiar to, say, tribal Indians or African blacks as they might to well-educated whites.

WHY WAS Galton's approach shunned almost completely? Knowledgeable psychologists might reply that it *was* tried, namely by the American experimental psychologist Clark Wissler, in 1901, but that it failed. Wissler did not discover any correlations between reaction times and intelligence. This is part of the answer, but it is not the whole.

Wissler's experiment was in fact a very bad experiment. Reaction times are variable for any individual; and hence a large number of experiments are required before we get a reasonable average. Something like 100 experiments have to

H. J. EYSENCK *is Professor of Psychiatry at the University of London, and Director of the Psychological Department at the Maudsley Hospital. Among his numerous books are "Uses and Abuses of Psychology" (n.e. Penguin, 1970), "The Scientific Structure of Personality" (1952), and "The Structure and Measure of Intelligence" (1979). His most recent books, as co-author, include "Astrology" (Temple Smith, 1982), "Explaining the Unexplained" (Weidenfeld, 1982), and "Intelligence" (Macmillan, 1981).*

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be averaged for each person to get a reproducible result. But Wissler only used about five, making his estimates of reaction time exceedingly unreliable. Furthermore, he worked only with highly intelligent students at Columbia University, thus restricting the range of intelligence unduly; this always substantially reduces correlations. And, finally, he did not use an intelligence test at all to correlate with the reaction-time experiment, but made use of the academic standing of his subjects. This is known to correlate very little, if at all, with intelligence tests in such a highly selected group.

The question thus arises why it was that a very bad experiment (known to be bad even by the standards prevailing at the turn of the century) was universally accepted as disproof of Galton's position. The most reasonable hypothesis must surely be that it was part of the *Zeitgeist*: I mean the universal belief, so popular in America, that education can work wonders, that all men are equal in ability, and that insistence on the relevance of genetic differences is the work of the devil. The Binet-type test agreed with these preconceptions, whereas Galton's theories did not; hence the acceptance of a very poor experiment to rule out of court the whole Galton approach.

IN RECENT YEARS there has been a revival of interest in the Galton tradition, and much work has been done to show that reaction times do in fact correlate quite highly with intelligence as measured by Binet-type IQ. Some experimenters have gone even beyond this and shown that it is possible to measure IQ by means of strictly physiological calculations involving the processing of information through the cortex. But before turning to these developments, let me briefly consider one or two of the myths that have so shrouded the whole controversy in fog and darkness that it has become almost impossible to come to any sensible kind of agreement.

PERHAPS THE MOST PERNICIOUS and persistent of these myths is that in some way a belief in *genetic* causes is related to Right-wing political ideology, and a belief in *environmental* causes to Left-wing Marxist ideologies. It is also often suggested that, in some way, belief in the genetic determination of intelligence justifies the support of the *status quo* and legitimises it in some way—whereas belief in environmental factors legitimises radical reform and even revolution.

All this is, of course, complete nonsense. It misrepresents the views of Marx, Engels and Lenin, and has been repudiated sharply by Marxist psychologists and philosophers in the USSR, the *DDR*, and other Communist countries. Thus two East German psychologists, Mehlhorn and Mehlhorn, published in 1981 a textbook of psychology, with the sanction of the Communist government of East Germany. In this they condemn the interpretation that belief in the (partial) determination of individual differences in intelligence by genetic causes is "unMarxian" and Right-wing; they condemn quite explicitly any such interpretations as "*unmarxistisch*"—"because they contradict the clearly different positions of Marx, Engels and Lenin." They quote other East German and Russian psychologists in support of this view, and go on to cite Marx and Engels in some detail to the effect that genetic causes are indeed very powerful in respect to differences in mental and artistic ability. These ideas are, to be sure, clearly explicit in the best-known Marxist writings, as the Soviet psychologist Krutezki pointed out in 1974: "When it is said, '*from each* according to his abilities', then it is clearly stated that men in this respect are not equal. . . ."

Even more explicit is the statement by Lenin:

> "When one says that experience and reason testify that men are not equal, then one understands under equality the equality of abilities or the equivalence of bodily strength and mental capacities of men. It is quite obvious that in this sense men are not equal. No single reasonable man and no single reasonable socialist ever forgets this. . . ."[1]

Lenin goes on to characterise as an "absurdity" the idea of extending equality into these spheres, and concludes by saying:

> "When socialists speak of equality, they understand thereby social equality, the equality of social position, but not at all the equality of physical and mental abilities of individual persons. . . ."

Conforming with this view, much research has been done in the USSR, in Poland, in the *DDR* and other Communist countries on the inheritance of intellectual qualities. Thus, Lipovechaja reported in 1978 a study in Moscow of pairs of identical and fraternal twins. They were given the various sub-tests of the Wechsler scale, an American measure of IQ; he and his collaborators found a heritability in these Russian schoolchildren of .78, i.e. a heritability in excess of that which I found in a re-analysis of all available Western data (excluding those of Sir Cyril Burt, which have become suspect recently). Similarly, the extensive work of Firkowska in Poland has shown that, in spite of the attempts of the Communist government to introduce complete egalitarianism into the educational system, the health

[1] In Lenin's "Ein Liberaler Professor über die Gleichheit", *Werke*, Bd. 20, (East Berlin, 1965).

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system, and every other aspect of the individual's life, the observed variation in IQ and the correlations between the IQ of the children and the socio-economic status of the parents were similar to those found in capitalist countries. The authors rightly argued for the prime importance of genetic factors in producing the observed differences. Last but not least, the important work of Weiss in the *DDR* on genetic factors in intelligence and mathematical ability also stresses the overwhelming importance of genetic factors in these respects.

Thus, the position of the leading philosophers of Marxism (Marx himself, Engels, Lenin) and the research carried out in Communist countries, supports the view of those who are often condemned as "Right-wing", "bourgeois", and "capitalist" psychologists in the West. Clearly the myth of political determination of scientific beliefs in this respect is just that: a myth. The sooner Left-wing militants in the West learn the facts about the position taken by Marx and his followers, the more readily will we be able to dispel this ideological fog, and begin to have a more rational type of discussion.

TO SAY THIS is not to conclude that the critics of Binet-type IQ tests do not have a strong case.

All investigations have shown that there is a marked environmental determinant of IQ scores, less powerful than the genetic, but nevertheless strong and persistent, particularly in socially and racially deprived groups. Similarly, it has been shown that the IQ of such children *can* be raised considerably by adopting suitable nutritional, educational, and other social measures. Many psychologists have exaggerated the importance of these environmental factors, but no one has doubted their existence. This makes it very difficult to use IQ tests of this kind for many scientific and social purposes, without quite extensive statistical and other corrections. These are often difficult to understand, difficult to employ, and normally based on arguments which have not proved acceptable to all experts in the field. This is an inevitable consequence of adopting the Binet-type approach, which capitalised on educational and social factors in the construction of test items. Perhaps these difficulties could be avoided by returning to Galton's quite different approach.

LET ME FIRST summarise the results of recent studies of reaction times, and their correlation with intelligence.

There is no doubt that simple reaction-time experiments do show quite reasonable correlations with intelligence, but it is equally clear that these correlations are not high enough to substitute the one test for the other. However, it is possible to increase the correlation between reaction times and IQ tests considerably by increasing the complexity of the task. In the simple experiment, the subject has his finger on a button; when a light goes on he has to release the button and transfer his finger to another button, in front of the lamp, which he is required to depress. "Reaction time" is the time taken from the lighting-up of the lamp to his release of the first button (the time from the release of the first button to the pressing of the second button is called the movement time). The experiment can be complicated by having two, four, or eight lamps, each with a button, and arranged in such a way that any one of these lamps can light up, so that the subject has to consider in which direction he has to move his finger. This increases the reaction time (the more lamps, the harder the decision, and the longer the reaction time); and as the number of the lamps increases, so does the correlation of the reaction time with intelligence. In this way we can get correlations that are as high as those observed between one intelligence test and another.

We can increase the correlation even further by looking at the *variability* of individual subjects. Repeating the "reaction-time experiment" a number of times shows that the times are *not* identical, but vary around a mean or average value. (This is why we have to average a large number of experiments in order to get a reliable mean.) People differ with respect to their variability; some are always fairly close to their average value; others vary widely. It has been shown that the more intelligent a person is, the less variation do his reaction-time measures show, whereas for a dull person the variability is quite excessive. If we take together the variability and the complex reaction time of a person, then we get a Galtonesque measure of intelligence which correlates extremely well with Binet-type IQ.

NOTE THAT THIS IS quite incompatible with Binet's notions of intelligence. In the first place, the "reaction-time experiment" only measures one thing, not a number of different "abilities"; hence Binet was clearly wrong in assuming that the notion of intelligence was merely the average of a number of separate and distinct abilities. It comes out, rather as Galton thought, as the central determinant of abilities expressed in many different directions, with "reaction time" being quite central to all these abilities.

Secondly, Binet was obviously wrong in going for problem solving and measures of learning and knowledge in his work. None of these are involved in reaction-time measurement. Yet the correlation between Binet-type IQ and reaction time is as high

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as a correlation between one Binet-type IQ test and another. This is impossible to explain in terms of Binet's views, and very much strengthens the belief in Galton's original hypothesis.

In all this we have, for the purpose of argument, taken the ordinary IQ test as a kind of criterion. Up to a point this is surely justified by the great success these tests have had in practical life in measuring what the man-in-the-street normally would understand as intelligence. As has often been shown, people scoring high on these tests do well in school, do well at university, move ahead in jobs requiring high mental abilities, usually earn more money, and are generally more successful. IQ tests have effectively picked out officers in the army, and have shown their value in many other applied spheres.

FOLLOWING DETAILED STATISTICAL analyses of such tests, as applied to many different types of populations (including identical and fraternal twins, etc.), it has become apparent that such tests measure the Galton-type concept of intelligence to the extent of about 80%, whereas some 20% is contributed by environmental factors of the type stressed by Binet. Hence, although we have used the IQ test as a criterion, it clearly is not a perfect criterion; it is, we might say, only 80% correct, and 20% imperfect. It seems likely that the less-than-perfect correlation between Reaction Time and IQ is due to the fact that the correlation between the "true" part of the IQ and reaction time is almost perfect, but is brought down by the confounding effect of the environmental variables also measured by the IQ test. Thus, I would say that the results suggest that reaction-time tests are *better* tests of innate general ability than are the Binet-type measures which are *indirect* attempts to get at the neurophysiological basis of intellectual performance.

The possibility of getting an even more direct measure seems to present itself with the refinement of methods of measuring brain waves on the electroencephalograph. The EEG as such has proved rather disappointing. Little in the way of correlation has been found between "brain waves" so recorded and intelligence. However, the so-called "evoked potential" seems to be more hopeful. This term refers to a series of waves superimposed on the ordinary EEG pattern, and produced by a sudden sound (or light flash) presented to the individual subject strapped into the EEG apparatus. Many attempts were made to look at different aspects of these waves, such as their amplitude, and their latency (i.e. the speed with which they followed each other). The results were suggestive but not very encouraging, the maximum correlation between IQ and "evoked potential" being around .3, which means that they only shared about 10% in common. This was not very much to go on. In addition there was no real theory to account for the observed correlation; furthermore, measurements of "latency" and "amplitude" were difficult to execute because the waves as such are quite difficult to identify because of the presence of many little squiggles in the record.

OUR OWN APPROACH—pioneered by Drs Alan and Elaine Hendrickson in my department at the University of London—was rather different.

We started out with an explicit hypothesis, derived from it a specific method of measurement, and then went on to demonstrate the relevance of this measure to intelligence as determined by "Wechsler IQ", i.e. the IQ derived from a well-known individual intelligence test, which is regarded as one of the best, if not the best, available at present. The theory is largely biochemical and neurophysiological, and hence outside the compass of a brief article. It has been presented in detail, as have the results of reaction-time and evoked-potential tests, in my recent book *A Model for Intelligence*.

Essentially the application of this neurological theory to the measurement of intelligence is based on two hypotheses, for both of which there is good evidence. The first states that the observed trace, i.e. the pattern of waves and squiggles which is presented on the EEG screen, is in some way related directly to the details of the message which is being conveyed, i.e. in the simple case of our recording the presentation of a loud sound, or the occurrence of a brief flash of light. The second hypothesis is that during the processing of this information through the cortex, errors of transmission occur and that these will be more frequent in the dull than in the bright. To test this hypothesis, of course, we must have a way of measuring the occurrence of these errors; and this can be done along several lines.

One of these is simply to look at the complexity of the trace. Errors occurring at different times and in different parts of the neural chain will reduce the complexity of the trace, and hence eliminate much of the actual message that is being transmitted. We compared the evoked potential waves recorded from both bright and dull subjects. It was only necessary to inspect these waves to see that the dull children have very simple wave forms, stripped of all the squiggles and complexities so characteristic of the waves of bright children. Computers can be programmed to detect and measure in detail the degree of complexity of a given wave, and it is these scores that we have used in our work.

In a large-scale study of over 200 school-

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children, presenting a reasonably complete quota-sample of school-children as far as intelligence is concerned, we found an astonishingly high correlation between the EEG measure, on the one hand, and Wechsler IQ on the other. The correlation turned out to be ·83 which is certainly higher than the correlation one would expect to find between the Wechsler and some other type of IQ test. The correlation is also higher than that between IQ and any single measure, or combination of measures of reaction-time experiments; and it has since been replicated with other intelligence tests, and samples of adult subjects. The finding does not necessarily prove the various theories outlined above to be correct; scientific research can never prove a theory to be correct; it can only show that it is not falsified by the data, and that in so far as these particular experiments go the theory may very well be on the right lines. Nevertheless, to find such a high correlation on such a large sample, and to be able to replicate it, suggests that there is in truth a close relationship between IQ and "evoked potential", measured along the lines discussed above. This is very strong support indeed for Galton's hypotheses. At the same time it seems to make it difficult, if not impossible, to maintain a Binet-type approach to these phenomena. Even more strongly than the work on reaction times do we find data quite incompatible with the notion that intelligence is only "the average of many different abilities", and that these abilities are closely related to environmental, educational, and cultural determinants.

AT THE SAME TIME, these data strongly support the genetic hypothesis, because it has been well-documented that EEG wave-forms, when studied in identical and fraternal twins, show very high heritabilities, much higher than do Binet-type IQ tests. Much work will, of course, be necessary in order to replicate, verify, and extend these suggestions. But at the moment it certainly looks as if a real revolution is taking place in the measurement of intelligence, and in the debate about the nature of intelligence. We are no longer reduced to statistical evaluations and interpretations of data from tests of the Binet type which, ultimately, are unsuitable for the purpose. We now have available tests which may, if the results can be replicated, be almost pure measures of the genotype. This is an exciting possibility, and it will no doubt attract a good deal of attention on the part of experimental psychologists.

If the hypothesis is true that these physiological measures encapsulate the essence of intelligence, then our way is certainly clear to do much more truly scientific research in many areas. IQ tests always give results which are merely comparative, i.e. John has a higher IQ than Jim, Kathy, and Margaret. There is no true zero; and there are no equal intervals. We cannot say, for instance, that the difference between IQ of 80 and 85 is the same in size as the difference in IQ between 115 and 120. Thus, IQ tests give us scores which can be treated statistically, but which do not allow us to do many of the kinds of statistical computations or mathematical measurements which we should like to carry out. "Evoked potential" measures, on the other hand, are in fact physical measurements, and hence are not subject to these limitations. This is a great advantage.

HOW DO WE KNOW that this physiological measure is, in fact, independent of the environmental factors which determine 20% of the Wechsler IQ score? Consider one of the experiments we carried out in relation to this question.

First of all, we picked out 25 children whose parents were of high socio-economic status, and 25 children whose parents were of low socio-economic status. We then determined the difference between them from the point of view of Wechsler IQ—which turned out to be 23 points. We predicted that if the "evoked potential" measure was indeed a relatively pure measure of genetic intelligence, not confounded with environmental variables, then the differentiation between these two groups of children should be 20% *less* than on the Wechsler test—simply because our EEG measure would not be concerned with the 20% of the Wechsler score determined by environmental factors. When the test was done, the results were in line with prediction: the differentiation of the two groups was 20% less than it had been on the Wechsler test. This is good evidence for the validity of our theories.

Much else will, of course, now be possible that has hitherto proved very difficult to do when using Binet-type IQ tests. We should be able to trace the growth of intelligence through childhood, starting at a much earlier age than is possible with the use of IQ tests, which are not normally applicable much before the age of 6 or so. We should be able to measure "the decline of intelligence with age", which has previously proved very difficult because of the adulteration of IQ measures by knowledge and educational background. We should be able to test the hypothesis that men and women are equal in intelligence. This has been the finding with standard tests of intelligence, but this equality may have been due in part to the fact that the test items have sometimes been selected in such a way as to *make* the scores of men and women equal, by eliminating items favouring one sex or the other. In fact we did analyse our results on the "evoked potential", finding that for our school-children there was no difference on complexity of

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the wave-form when boys and girls were compared with each other. We found, additionally, that the boys had more extreme scores in either direction, i.e. there were more very bright and very dull boys. This is in line with findings that have been accumulated over the past years, using ordinary IQ tests; they also show greater variability for boys and men than for girls and women.

IT WILL BE OBVIOUS that much building of new theories will have to be done to incorporate these new findings in our picture of intelligence. Similarly, the practical application of intelligence tests may well be revolutionised by these new discoveries. For many ordinary purposes—such as school testing, industrial testing, and testing in the armed forces—existing group tests are perfectly adequate. Being cheap and easy to administer, they will probably not need to be replaced. But for work with psychiatric patients—where anxiety, depression, geriatric illness, psychosis, etc., make the application of ordinary IQ tests very difficult—the new test will certainly present a considerable improvement. Similarly, in relation to culturally or racially disadvantaged children, youths, and adults, the new test will give a much fairer picture of their intellectual ability than was possible using ordinary IQ tests.

The use of the new tests for experimental purposes has already been indicated above; it is here, I would imagine, that their greatest contribution will lie. But however that may be, there is little doubt that we are moving into an exciting future where the long dissatisfaction that has been building up over the years with Binet-type IQ tests will finally get a chance to express itself in the choice of alternative means of measuring intelligence.

This is truly a revolution that has been both necessary and inevitable. Let us hope that its effects will be as useful and beneficial as, on the whole, have been those of Binet-type IQ testing.

Blinis

Tonight as I prepared them
Puffed, small and dappled brown
As they should have been,
I thought of Baboushka
In the long Parisienne afternoons
Flattening the bubbles of flour
With a worn wooden spoon and
Stirring, stirring the honey-coloured cream.
I was allowed to whip the egg whites dry
And paint a swirl of butter in the pan.
I don't remember eating them
Just the stooped, content old lady
So engrossed and certain of her art.
Later, she would take me through
The spotted, curling photographs
That lined her walls with comfort
And bring me to her other life—
A sepia land of country dachas, carriages
And wooden colonels taking tea.
We journeyed far from the damp, small flat,
With the ikons by the door, on the right,
The dust-woven rugs from Algeria
And the little, blackened blinis pan.

Baboushka, my life is fast and easy now;
I do not use your old and slow techniques,
But should it change as yours did
And leave me unprepared,
Please pray for me,
For I've lost my bible and my wooden spoon.

Felicity Napier

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MEMOIR

Arnold

An Intimate Portrait—By JOHN WAIN

ARNOLD was a citizen of Stoke-on-Trent. He was born there during the reign of Queen Victoria and he lived there for nearly eighty-one years. He died five or six years ago, as I write, but he does not seem, yet, to have started to be forgotten. I still meet people who remember him and like to recall him, some of them a long way from Stoke-on-Trent, and I am beginning to realise that I was not alone in finding him unusual and memorable.

He was a small man—five feet six inches—and rather skimpy in build, probably through not having enough to eat while he was growing. His nose was beaky (he preferred it to be called "Roman"), his lips full, his blue eyes piercing and full of energy. His hair had probably been fair in his childhood, but long before I knew him it had settled down to being an ordinary mouse-colour; by nature I would guess that it was rather unruly, but he kept it well cut and sternly plastered down. He could not have felt at ease with untidy hair any more than he could have felt at ease with clothes that were stained, or baggy, or torn. He was always what people call "well turned out", and he walked with a brisk, alert step and generally gave an impression of promptness, of being ready for anything, of rather welcoming the unexpected event that broke the pattern of dailiness. His voice was good and he spoke clearly and distinctly, though not slowly.

I do not know whether Arnold had any unusual gifts, but he was unusual in his energy, his positiveness and his unslackening interest in life. He opened his eyes on each new day with the attitude of a man entering on an inheritance. Another whole day! What a blessing—what a privilege!

I knew him for many years but I never once heard him say he was bored. The word did not seem to be in his vocabulary. Why should it be, when the concept was never real to his mind?

Arnold was born in one of a row of very poor cottages, long since demolished, called Johnson's Terrace. They were at the bottom of Hartshill Bank, which means that of the six Pottery towns, not yet amalgamated into the city of Stoke-on-Trent, the one Arnold inhabited was Stoke itself. Though in 1910 it gave its name to the federation, Stoke was in fact one of the meanest and ugliest of this string of towns; Burslem had some approach to civic dignity and Hanley had the prosperous shops and the amusements, but Stoke had nothing but pot-banks and a dirty canal and narrow streets lined with low brick houses. The only building worth looking at twice was the large and handsome parish church, in whose yard Josiah Wedgwood was buried. Stoke had the railway, which was why the city was ultimately named after it, but it was not an important railway town like Crewe a few miles away over the Cheshire border. Stoke meant long hours of work, small pubs, pawnshops, football on Saturday afternoons and chapel on Sunday evening.

Arnold's family, oddly enough, were not Chapel. They were Church if they were anything, but mostly they were not anything. It is difficult to speak or to think of them collectively as a family; they were a jumble of individuals, who happened to live in the same cramped little house. Arnold's father had very little ambition to be the impressive head of a family. He was often out of work, and when he was in work he took care to spend a large proportion of his earnings on beer, which helped him to forget his surroundings. He was a skilful man in the pottery trade; one of his skills was that he could fire a kiln, which must have been very res-

JOHN WAIN, *poet, literary critic, playwright, and novelist, was Oxford Professor of Poetry from 1973–78. His latest books include a new novel, "Young Shoulders", (winner of the 1982 Whitbread Award), his "Collected Poems, 1949–79", and a new edition of his biography of Samuel Johnson, all published by Macmillan. His radio play, "Frank", a dramatisation of the life of Dr Johnson's black manservant, was broadcast by BBC Radio 4 last autumn. He is now working on a series of evocations of people who have been important to him; it is to be called "Dear Shadows" and will include his memoir of Arnold.*

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ponsible work. The old bottle kilns had about half-a-dozen grates round their circumference, each one like an ordinary domestic fireplace, and you had to light all these and then keep them at a constant temperature for twelve hours—if you failed it cost the factory a lot of money and doubtless cost you your job. Arnold's father could do this and several other jobs on a pot-bank, and there was no reason why he should not have been in steady employment. No outside reason, that is. The reason was within himself. He could never bring himself to sign on for a job on a regular basis. He preferred to be hired by the day. Perhaps it gave him some small illusion of freedom, of being an independent spirit who could make up his mind each morning whether that day should be work or holiday. In fact, he always let luck, or other people, decide the matter; invariably, at six o'clock every morning, he would make his way to Campbell Place, the nearest approach in Stoke to a wide market square, and the foremen would come out from the surrounding factories and take on as many hands as they needed. His conditions of employment, in fact, were exactly those we read about in the Parable of the Vineyard.

Since he never saved any money, it was a thin day at home when he was not hired, and not much better when he was, for he preferred beer to food and did not see it as his concern to provide the latter in any abundance. When, later in his boyhood, Arnold began to earn a little money by running errands and the like, if the family meal included something filling like jam suet-roll, he would buy his father's share from him for a penny. I think I would have had to sink pretty low before I would take money from my children in exchange for food, even food I would otherwise be eating myself.

A PENNY, in about 1905, would buy half a pint of beer, and it would be better beer than we can get today, so Arnold's father may well have preferred it to jam roll. He earned five shillings when he did a day's work; if he had drunk less and worked at all often this would have been enough even for that large family (parents, four boys and a girl), for prices were very low in those days. Arnold's mother could put a hot meal on the table for sixpence. She would go to the butcher's for "four penn'orth of bits", the odds and ends that always result when meat is trimmed; the greengrocer would sell her a pennyworth each of potatoes and "pot-herbs"; and, using the fire that in any case kept the family warm and dried their clothes, she made this tanner do its work of nourishment.

The trouble was there were too many days when even a tanner was too much to hope for. The couple's first-born, a boy named Will, lived with grandparents a few streets away; I never heard the exact reason for this, but it seems to indicate that they were having difficulty, right from the beginning, in making ends meet. Then came a girl, then two other boys, then Arnold; and when Arnold was three or four years old "his nose was pushed out", as his mother did not fail to remark, by the arrival of one more offspring, Norman, the baby of the family.

The image she had in mind was of a row of piglets feeding. Not that there was ever much for Arnold's nose to be pushed out of. During one desperate winter, his mother went to the Town Hall to ask if any kind of relief was available. The official told her that nothing could be handed out, but if the family were destitute they could be admitted to the workhouse. Arnold remembered her coming home and laughing about this, though what she had to laugh at is more than I can see. Perhaps she laughed in order to stop herself from breaking down and crying all night.

WHEN ARNOLD REACHED the age of five he was made free of the blessings of compulsory free education, a great British innovation and at that time less than 30 years old. He went to Cross Street Elementary School, Stoke. On the first morning his grandmother carried him there on her shoulders, so that he would know the way there and back, and he cried all through the journey. What he had heard about school in advance, no doubt from his brothers, had not given him the impression that it was a happy place. In the very simple school organisation of those days, the children did not go to different teachers for different subjects: one teacher had charge of a class (it was called a "Standard") for a year and they were then passed on in a body to another teacher. The man who was to be in charge of Arnold's standard for the next twelve months greeted them by showing them his cane and rasping, "I'm Mr. So-and-So. This is my cane. We're going to see who gets tired first—me of giving it to you or you of getting it." He may have been intending a grim joke; if so, it was too grim for the nervous, downcast children ushered for the first time into the prison-like classroom. The next seven years, till at twelve he could finally get away from school, were misery for Arnold.

The poky, uncomfortable little house they lived in could doubtless be rented for half-a-crown a week, but to budget even this sum regularly was beyond the power of his father. They fell behind with the rent; in the dead of night they piled their belongings into a cart and moved to a new address. This process, the "moonlight flit", was familiar enough in the poorer reaches of the working class in those days and for a long time afterwards. Since the removal was usually to somewhere within half a mile and everybody in the district knew everybody, you only got away with it if

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the landlord was prepared to be philosophical about writing off a bad debt rather than troubling to bring a prosecution. Landlords were not always so easy-going. Sometimes their patience ran out. Arnold's father did at least one spell in Stafford Prison, during which the family income was earned by the older boys.

When Arnold was not at school he was usually out trying to earn a few coppers. He mucked out a horse; he ran errands; on Saturdays, until ten o'clock at night, he watched over the outside display of a draper's shop and took the money for small purchases. All this standing and walking about was a trouble to Arnold because of his Bad Foot. This deserves capitalisation because it was an institution. Arnold's Bad Foot was the central fact of his boyhood. He suffered from a skin disease called grimly, lupus: a disease, probably related to tuberculosis, which produces suppurating patches of rawness. It is the kind of disease that only attacks people who live the kind of life Arnold had to live, and consequently is very rare in the England of today. He had two patches of it, one on the inside of his right arm just above the elbow, and the other on the upper part of his right foot. The arm was easier to bear than the foot, which had to be crushed into a hard boot every morning, to the accompaniment of tears of pain. Nobody in the household, of course, ever suggested sandals. They had never seen a pair of sandals, and would in any case not have wanted Arnold making a spectacle of himself.

Equally obviously, Arnold's parents never took him to a doctor because they could not have paid the bill. Medical provision for the poor in those days was mainly a matter of going to hospital, and this Arnold would never have done as long as his feet, however diseased, would have enabled him to run away and hide. If he had heard bad stories about school, he had heard utterly terrifying ones about the things they did to you in hospital.

The only approach to medical care he ever had was an occasional visit to a woman called Nurse Mellor, who dispensed very simple treatments from her little house. Nurse Mellor would bravely tackle almost anything that was wrong with you, knowing that if she did not there was no one else who would. She would put on poultices, mix lotions and medicines, even extract teeth—though she had of course no means of giving anaesthetics, and the tooth sometimes took quite a time to dig out. Nurse Mellor's compassionate heart was touched when skinny little Arnold used to roll up his sleeve and show her the patch of lupus on his arm. "My poor boy", she would murmur as she applied some simple and not very effective medicament. He never showed her his foot.

Is all this harrowing? Gentle reader, be comforted. The story of Arnold is about to take on a more cheerful tone.

THE MISERY of his foot, and his low health in general, obviously spoilt his childhood; but they were, in all probability, the reason why he survived to live into old age. When Arnold was 20, the 1914–18 War broke out. Since he was of military age from the very beginning, and would presumably have been in the Infantry, the chances of his living through until November 1918 would have been very small. Physical standards for recruitment were low; you had to have something really wrong with you, something as serious as Arnold's lupus, to be turned down. Arnold was turned down.

For the next few years the general unfairness of life, which up to that point had worked against him, came into operation in his favour. Arnold was wretchedly educated, but he was quick and adaptable, eager to seize his chances and rise above his pitiful beginnings; and with virtually all the men of his generation away, many of them never to return, opportunities were plentiful. He entered gainful employment; with better food, his health improved; his lupus at last received some competent attention in a hospital. Life became something more than a continual struggle against hunger, pain, and humiliation. Arnold at 21 resembled a young cherry-tree which, at first stunted by bitter winds, has begun to blossom. He went on putting out blossoms until death came to him 60 years later.

Fundamental decisions were made in quick succession, for Arnold was a young cherry-tree in a hurry. On one Bank Holiday he and a friend—this was in one of the last of those long, peaceful summers before the world crashed—went out for the day to Rudyard Lake. This, an artificial lake serving as a reservoir for the Potteries, lies in picturesque country, and in those days before the petrol engine was common it was the favourite day out for young people from those towns. You took the tram as far as it went and then walked, the last couple of miles being along Dunwood Lane, a small pretty road clinging to the edge of a tree-lined ridge. It was a great place for romantic encounters; many people in middle life had sentimental memories of summer outings to Rudyard Lake; Mr and Mrs Kipling even named their son after it.

On this Bank Holiday, Arnold and his friend were walking along Dunwood Lane when they noticed two girls, also in Bank Holiday clothes and Bank Holiday mood, coming towards them. In a moment of bravado they dared each other to go up to these girls and begin a conversation. After that, there could be no backing down, and the four ended by walking back to the town together. Arnold found himself talking to the one with brown eyes and long clustering dark hair, almost gipsy-like, shy and (he felt) mysterious. With some difficulty, he got out of her who she

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was and where she lived. She had a sweetheart, but within a year or so the sweetheart went to the trenches and the trenches opened and swallowed him for ever. Arnold pressed on with his courtship; she consented; they became man and wife.

As Arnold's life emerged into something like the sunshine—much more like it, at any rate, than anything in the crepuscular years of his boyhood—so the basic diagram of his personality began to emerge for bystanders to see. People who are deprived and humiliated in childhood nearly always go one of two ways. Either they grow up shy and diffident, asking only to creep through life as inconspicuously as possible, or they react into bumptiousness. Arnold does not quite fit this usual categorisation because he was never bumptious. He had a vein of humour and a sense of proportion which effectively guarded him against that fate. On the other hand he was certainly not shy. His lack of a decent education, his unawareness of anything that went on outside the life of his own neighbourhood, his unimpressive physique—none of these, not all of these together, inhibited him from a general willingness to participate, to have a go, to involve himself in any kind of situation and generally to take the stage. He had a natural gift for public speaking; he could sometimes be tongue-tied in the presence of individuals, if he found them grand or daunting; but he was never tongue-tied before a crowd.

During his growing-up years, the family had been entirely lacking in any sense of unity, of the shared experience of life. Arnold could never recall any one of them asking any other one where he or she had been that day, or what doing. You came in and went out, engrossed in your own purposes and the miserable little house seemed an abode of strangers, without even the down-and-out companionship of a doss-house. Instead of being conditioned by this into accepting invisibility and wanting to blend more and more closely into his background, Arnold reacted into a fierce need for attention. If his temperament and his circumstances had been different, he might have become a politician, of the kind who rises into politics by way of street-corner meetings and soapbox oratory. Instead, the path that opened before him was that of religion.

Yes, religion. The early years of this century saw a great deal of evangelising among the poor. The legacy of Victorian industrialism—slums, ignorance, densely crowded streets where the people had lost all memory of their centuries of village life—created a need which the Church of England, busy ministering to the middle class in their stiff collars and Sunday hats, was not equipped to meet. To some extent the Nonconformist churches met this need, but even they did not often get down to the level of the hard industrial working classes, let alone the drunks and derelicts who were the concern of General Booth's Salvation Army.

The Church of England did its best in a worried, paternalistic, amateurish way. In particular it established the Church Army—a straight copy of the Salvation Army, with uniforms, ranks, bands, open-air meetings—and it set up Missions, humble brick halls where people whose clothes were too shabby, and whose manners too unceremonious, might feel at home in the solemnity of a parish church.

The Church Army used to hold open-air meetings, singing hymns, saying prayers, shouting the gospel message to passers-by, Salvationist style, and at these meetings people of every kind would "testify." Sometimes a reformed drunkard would stand up and tell his neighbours that the Lord Jesus had helped him to leave drink alone. Sometimes it would even be a child who spoke up. One evening, when Arnold was about twelve, the Church Army captain invited him to stand on a chair, out there on the pavement, and speak of his religious convictions and emotions to the ring of upturned faces about him.

What were these convictions, these emotions? I have no doubt that they were genuine enough. The religious animal and the political animal are, obviously, not totally distinct species; they can interbreed, and produce a mixture within the same individual. There have been many examples on the Catholic Right, especially in France, of a political career fuelled by religious attitudes; and, especially in England, of the "nonconformist conscience" impelling men and women into Labour politics in cases where the actual belief in God has not survived childhood. And yet Arnold does not quite fit that pattern either. He was too earthy, too vividly responsive to the things of this world, to belong to the category of the naturally religious, though he undoubtedly had other-worldly feelings and intuitions. He was too impatient with intrigue, too little interested in power, to be a true political animal, though he undoubtedly felt impatience at evil and muddle and suffering. He was on some kind of middle ground of his own. Perhaps, given the appropriate background, he might have been an actor (he was, in fact, a dab hand at amateur theatricals). One thing is certain: the neglect, the indifference, the loneliness of growing up at the bottom of the social heap and at the bottom of the family heap in that comfortless little house left him with a fierce need for attention. By the time he was about sixteen, he was clear in his own mind—whether he actually expressed it in those terms or, more probably, not—that what he wanted most was for people to look at him and listen to him.

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THE AVENUE TO THIS lay through the Church. In adolescence, Arnold's ambition was to be a Church Army captain. When other career prospects opened up to him, and when his young wife began to bring him a family, this notion was discarded, but the Church remained the channel through which his energies could flow. He passed the simple examination necessary to become a Lay Reader, empowered to conduct services (except for pronouncing the Blessing), and deliver sermons. His preaching was fiery and eloquent. He spoke from a few notes, improvising round his central statements as the best speakers in every field have always done simply because there is no other way. From that first childish "testimony" piped out while standing on a chair, he progressed to sermons which filled the churches all over North Staffordshire, to which he was invited. He was always in demand; many a hard-worked parson, longing for a Sunday evening to himself for once, felt the relief of being able to depend on Arnold to turn up and give an electrifying sermon. He might not have welcomed Arnold as an ordained cleric in a neighbouring parish, offering week-by-week competition to his own more pedestrian style; but as an occasional performer Arnold was perfect. Or, at any rate, near enough to perfection for the then Archdeacon of Stoke (it had duly become a federated City since Arnold's birth) to offer him what amounted to a cure of souls, as I shall now relate.

I HAVE SAID that the Church of England struggled to keep up in the evangelical field by two means, the Church Army and the Mission. One such Mission stood on a brick-strewn piece of waste ground near the canal which led from Stoke to Trent Vale and outward. This stretch, this non-place, was known as "Potts's Ground"; correctly, I suppose, it should have been pronounced "Pottses", but the populace, and Arnold with them, never called it anything but "Pott's Ground", as if some enormous pot had cleared a space round itself—which, in larger terms, was just about what *had* happened.

Pott's Ground was in Boothen, and was officially a subsidiary or satellite of All Saints' Church, Boothen, a pleasant and unpretentious Victorian church, now demolished, as the canal has been filled in and Pott's Ground itself obliterated by the restless tide of city development. All Saints' Church may have been unpretentious, but it was awesome enough for the people in the poorer quarters to avoid it. Pott's Ground Mission was where they worshipped, or nowhere. And now, some time in the mid 1920s, the Archdeacon invited Arnold to take over the running of the Mission.

Officially this involved holding a service every Sunday night, with Church of England hymns and prayers and a sermon. There was a choir, selected from among the congregation, who sang the hymns from the platform, but the composition of this choir depended more on strategic than musical considerations. A backslider, who appeared at the Sunday evening service three weeks running and then stayed away for four or five, would be more likely to be invited to join the choir than someone with a good voice who reliably attended week after week. Why not? The reliable worshipper with the good voice would be singing anyway. By such harmless arts, but most of all by the eloquence of his preaching, Arnold filled Pott's Ground Mission and kept it full for seven years, at the end of which even his vitality began to run out. For the running of the Mission was not something that occupied Sunday only. These people, rough, untaught, working for low wages, needed a spiritual guide and, amazingly, they accepted Arnold in this role. I say "amazingly" because people are always reluctant to concede any authority to someone they have always known. And in Arnold's case it was not merely that they had always known him. He had started life among them, which is usually enough on its own to provoke the "We-knew-him-when" reaction, and what a start! His birthplace was scarcely a mile from Pott's Ground, and what a birthplace! These people had seen Arnold as a half-starved, ragged child; they knew the slum he came from; they had seen his father shambling from the pub, and doubtless some of them had seen him being led away by policemen for not paying the rent. Arnold came among them not only with none of the advantages of the stranger from an unknown background who can be made the object of interesting speculation; not even with the reasonable head-start of being from a family that was respected in the town. He started right back, from the most handicapped position, and by the sheer force of his personality, his energy, his kindliness, his unstinted commitment, he gained authority, an authority which held good right to the gates of death. When people in the Pott's Ground district were dying—and in those days people mostly died at home rather than in hospital—Arnold would be sent for. Still young, still skinny and unimpressive, but known, trusted and admired, he sat by many a death-bed, fanning some fevered sufferer with a newspaper and saying the last prayers.

ARNOLD NEVER GAVE UP the pulpit. It was too deeply in his blood. To say what he had to say within a context of religious ritual, amid hymn-singing and prayer-murmuring, appealed to something very central in him. On the other hand his sermons usually had some social content. His message was always, intellectually, a simple one:

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deny yourself, put other people first, forgive your enemies, and do these things within the context of the society you live in. As he gained in age and authority, he expanded his activities into the field of local politics. He became a City Councillor and a magistrate.

DURING THE SECOND WORLD WAR, when (at any rate after 1941) popular enthusiasm for the Soviet Union mounted to a great height, Arnold shared this enthusiasm to the full. He made the assumption, as many people did, that the War-time alliance would make a foundation for lasting friendship and cooperation, that the mutual suspicion of the years since 1917 would be forgotten. He worked tirelessly for his local area of Anglo-Soviet friendship, finally joining the platform at a mass meeting in the city's biggest hall some time in 1942. The other speakers, who were all professional politicians, seemed poor speakers by comparison with Arnold. They were avuncular, or rambling, or self-indulgent, or emptily rabble-rousing; or all by turns. He spoke briefly, lucidly, forcefully. The performance did not go unregarded. In the course of the next three or four years it was several times suggested to him that he should stand for Parliament. The suggestion, I gather, was a serious one, made by various MPs, who stood ready to set the necessary arrangements in motion; and with Arnold's local support he could scarcely have failed to win a seat. He pondered; hesitated; finally decided, wisely, to remain a big fish in a small pond. The size and complexity of Westminster were, understandably, frightening to the boy from Johnson's Terrace and Cross Street School, however far he had come and however much he had grown. The loss to the world was not great; the gain to his own neighbourhood appreciable.

When Arnold had an important speech to prepare, such as the one with which he dominated that Anglo-Soviet meeting, it was his practice (except in the dead of winter) to get up at about 5 a.m., drive his car out into the country and think out his speech amid the silence and freshness he found there. Stoke-on-Trent, even after thirty years of expansion, is still not a large city; in those days it was smaller, and very attractive countryside came close on all sides. Arnold loved this countryside. He knew the wide moorlands to the north, the gentle dairy-farming country to the west and south; even the more flat and featureless stretch to the east, towards Derby and Nottingham, had some charms for him. He was a lifelong walker, at home where there were trees and grass and open views.

Arnold loved the countryside, he loved people and bustle, he loved the cut and thrust of debate and the drama of holding an audience. And so on. He was the furthest removed from those people who yawn in the face of creation and declare themselves "bored." I have always had difficulty in understanding these people, still more in sympathising with them, especially when they offer as a justification for foolish and anti-social behaviour—e.g. hallucinating themselves with drugs—this plea of being "bored." Bored? How can they, how dare they, be bored? Are there no books in the world, no music, no paintings? Are there no landscapes, no plants, no rocks? Are there no human causes that cry out to be espoused? no relationships? no memories?

I never heard Arnold inveigh in this fashion against bored people because I honestly don't think he suspected their existence. To him, life was continuously interesting and exciting—which is not, of course, to say that he found it continuously pleasant. He had his sufferings, his annoyances, and frustrations, like anyone else. But he was, as any truly vital person is, spared the dusty corridor of boredom. If I had to choose one word to fit Arnold, I think that word would be *responsive*.

It was always marvellous to see, as a prime example, how vividly he responded to women. Put him in front of a woman, or a knot of women, whom he found in the slightest degree attractive, and his face, his eyes, his whole body took on an intense alertness. I don't know whether Arnold was, in practical terms, much of a womaniser; the issue does not much concern me; doubtless it would be unrealistic to expect someone as tuned-in to women as he was to go through a long life without having his little adventures along the way. What does concern me, because I so often marvelled at it, was how the magnetic feminine principle drew that wonderful energy to the surface in him.

IN THE SUMMER of 1975 a play of mine was put on at the Victoria Theatre, Stoke-on-Trent. Arnold, then eighty years old, came to the first night; the performance was followed by a party for the cast and friends, and I shall never forget the sight of Arnold at this party, holding forth to a semi-circle of young actresses whose prettiness seemed to come more vividly to life because of his obvious appreciation of it. Fun, enjoyment, gaiety, radiated from his frail old body.

And frail, by that time, it was in truth. That summer, which was long and sun-baked, he enjoyed to the full, sitting in his garden or strolling in the countryside. With the first cold touch of autumn he developed a bad chill, and suddenly, as happens with very old people, everything went wrong at once. Through the winter he lay at death's door, but (whether mercifully or not) very sophisticated medical treatment kept him alive;

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and with the first sun of spring he somehow struggled into his clothes and even went out. "I shall be better when the good weather comes", he told me; and in this faith we went for a walk together one April day. It was a ghostly memory of his old, striding walks; I drove him into the countryside, we got out of the car and, standing on a knob of rising ground, plotted a triangular promenade of about a mile.

Long before the mile was covered, Arnold was wilting. There simply was no strength left in that old body which had weathered malnutrition and disease seventy years earlier and had gone on at a cracking pace ever since. We walked more and more slowly. I was about to suggest that he sit down while I fetched the car when we heard behind us the drumming engine of a tractor. It came up, towing behind a flat wagon which had been emptied of its load. We flagged it down. The driver, a good-natured young fellow, let us scramble up on to the wagon, and sitting on its smooth boards, dusty with fragments of straw and chaff, we finished our triangle. Arnold looked round with satisfaction at the slowly-moving landscape, and remarked that this would be a good way of taking a holiday: touring the British Isles by tractor and trailer.

That was the last of my excursions with Arnold. His bed, and then the grave, claimed him in the first height of summer, the time of year he loved so much, and his life ended among springing green leaves and clamorous birds. But I remember him jolting along behind that tractor, enjoying the fun of it, finding zest in that last outing as he had found zest in all the others.

I was very proud of Arnold. He was my father.

Leavings

I think that's the last one gone behind the sink!

Though after every meal we wipe and sweep,
though every crack's sealed up, the kitchen clean,
no matter how particular we've been,
the cockroaches emerge once we're asleep,
and waking in the night to get a drink
I switch on the kitchen light and see them run
from their catches and (for them) rich hoards
behind the oven and the skirting boards,
all safe for another night-hunt; but for one.

Caught also by the suddenness of light
my dream attempts to scuttle back to sleep,
scatters in all directions, but part stays
betrayed by its hunger for its yesterdays
into futures with a blunted appetite
for tomorrows that are fresh but do not keep.
Love strews its leavings where the lean nights feed.
Those scavengers we keep at bay with care,
those night-thoughts that gnaw days with manic greed
at death are going to gorge on all they need
from memory's disconnected frigidaire.

The mind skates round its own transparent walls,
though that restraints exist it's unaware,
thinking because it *sees* there's nothing there
between what we once were and what we are,
and, feasting on old love, too gorged to climb
the slithering, steep slopes of see-through time,
I feel the full heart gets so far, then falls,
like this cockroach skidding in the cookie jar.

Tony Harrison

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POINTS OF THE COMPASS

A Devout Totalitarianism

Faith, Force & Islam—By W. G. LERCH

"At first, in the 1970s, there was pride and elation throughout the Arab world at the phenomenon of an 'Islamic Renaissance.' The spirit of Mohammed would once again prevail throughout all spheres of life: in culture, in law, in politics.

But the related phenomenon of the total power of the Ayatollah Khomeini has now rudely displaced vague Arab hopes with immediate alarm. If the renewal of Islamic faith meant extremism, violence, war, fanaticism, revenge and revolution, then surely the 'spirit of Allah' and the dogmas of his prophets needed to be reconsidered and the ambiguous interpretations revised?..."

NEWS-ANALYSIS

A HUNDRED YEARS AGO Europe's attention was caught and held by the Mahdi uprising. In the Sudan a dervish called Mohammed Ahmed took up arms and proclaimed himself to be the "Messiah" promised by Islamic tradition. He had come, he said, to consummate the faith, and to drive the foreigner from Sudanese soil. This meant first and foremost the Egyptians, who had overrun the Sudan in the early 1820s under orders from Khedive Mohammed Ali in Cairo. But the Mahdi also had his eye on the English, who had seized on the rebellion of the nationalist Arabi Pasha in 1882 as their pretext for gaining a firm foothold on the Nile. Once he had got rid of the foreigners, Mohammed Ahmed said, he would march to Mecca and Medina and on to Jerusalem and set the flag of the Prophet flying there once more; because even the Turks, who ruled over the holy places of Islam, had betrayed the "true faith."

The Mahdi enjoyed some spectacular successes, which further enhanced the almost mystical attraction he held for the Sudanese people. After defeating an Egyptian force led by the Englishman Hicks Pasha, he managed to conquer the key provincial town of El Obeid. And when towards the end of January 1885 the stronghold of Khartoum, desperately defended by Gordon Pasha, fell at last, the Mahdi reached the zenith of his power and prestige. But within a few months he was dead (in circumstances that are still not entirely clear).

Under his successor, Khalif Abdullah, the Mahdi's theocracy, which by now extended far beyond the frontiers of present-day Sudan, became a terrorist state. Slatin Pasha, Father Ohrwalder, and other European prisoners described the atrocities by means of which the Khalif sought to lead his Sudanese subjects along "the path of virtue." For thirteen years Abdullah clung to power, but then the Mahdi's empire collapsed: in 1898 Lord Kitchener (with the young Winston Churchill among his troops) destroyed the Dervish army at the battle of Omdurman. Within a year the Khalif's last remaining supporters had been mopped up.

Today, 85 years after Omdurman, it looks as if the Islamic world has been given a new Mahdi—in the person of the Iranian revolutionary leader, Ayatollah Khomeini. Not only has he driven the Westernised Shah Mohammed Reza Pahlevi from the throne in the name of a return to "true [i.e. Shi'ite] Islam" and set up an Islamic republic; he is also—notwithstanding the denials from Teheran—"exporting" his revolution to other countries of the Islamic world. The war between Teheran and Baghdad has filled the conservative Sheikhdoms, Emirates, and Sultanates on the Persian Gulf with alarm, (particularly since the Iranians' recent successes, which have taken many experts by surprise). They forgot about the "human factor"—because with his appeal to the religious archetypes and feelings of the Persians Aytollah Khomeini has been able to trigger in his "revolutionary guards" forces of a quite different order than those available to the Baath régime in Baghdad, for which many Iraqis have very little time—and their appeals to "Pan-Arab solidarity" have had small effect, given the divisions that exist within the Arab world. The radical mullahs in Teheran aim to bring down the "godless Saddam" (Hussein) and intend in addition to overthrow the "corrupt" Arab régimes around him. Those régimes are endeavouring—so far without much

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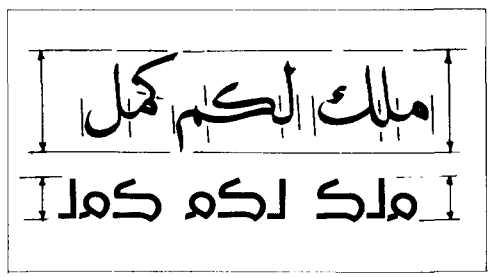
success—to stem the flood of Islamic radicalism, which they fear all the more because in eastern Saudi Arabia and Bahrain there are Shi'ite minorities listening attentively to the watchwords reaching them from the other side of the Gulf.

Now Khomeini as an Iranian revolutionary leader is undoubtedly stood in good stead by the kind of ideologisation of Islam that has long infected the masses even in the countries of the Sunnite persuasion. This phenomenon, which has so far left the West perplexed, is often erroneously described as a "Renaissance of Islam"—as if Islam had disappeared and were only now beginning to spread again from Morocco to the Philippines. What has changed is merely the intensity of identification with the religious heritage as well as its incorporation in a political strategy, giving rise to an "Islamism" that is concerned not so much with deepening the life of faith as with putting forward a political ideology. It is directed against the "decadent" West—including the Communist

The Calligraphic Revolution



For, five hundred years after the invention of the printing-press, of movable type which liberated writing from handwriting, the Arab world still refuses to accept the real meaning of the invention, and insists that the machine must attempt to imitate the hand, when it no longer has any need to do so.

THE *common basis for the civilisations and cultures of the Mediterranean was the development of the phonetic alphabet by the peoples of ancient Lebanon and Palestine. It was also in the Near Eastern and west Asian areas of the Arab world that the manufacture and use of paper as we know it today was developed and transmitted to Western Europe. But the printing-press which has such revolutionary effects on the cultural, social and economic life of Western Europe was much slower in its impact on the Arabic-speaking countries.*

This was not, as some scholars and thinkers have recently tried to argue, the result of a belief among Muslims that there was something sacred about the writing of Arabic, so that calligraphy became not only a means of communication but also a sacred art. It was due, in the first place, to the fact that the Arab countries did not have the highly-developed techniques of metallurgy and engraving which made possible the design and manufacture of type in Western Europe in the late 15th and 16th centuries, and in the second place, to the difficulties involved in reproducing in type the complexities of the cursive styles of Arabic handwriting.

The attention, and sometimes excessively fulsome praise and flattery bestowed on modern Arab calligraphers by Western writers and publications has turned away the attention of the Arab countries from what should be one of their major preoccupations, and confirmed them in one of their principal prejudices.

What is needed urgently by the Arabs in the field of communication—which is what writing is all about—is not the development of the calligraphers' skills, nor their ability to turn calligraphy into a vehicle for the imagination, but the creation and development of a genuine Arabic typography.

THUS TODAY, **while the western world which uses the Latin alphabet has at its disposal thousands of different styles of body-type, the Arab world uses only one, the *naskhi* style. But *naskhi*, which is one of many Arabic calligraphic styles, is really a kind of shorthand which has prevailed over other styles because it lends itself to speedy writing and copying. There is nothing sacred about it, it has no special relationship to the *Qur'an*, which has been copied in many styles, and it cannot be written by hand as fast as letters and words come out of the printing-press. Thus while it still has a place as an efficient way of writing by hand, it has been outmoded as a style for type.**

The refusal of the Arab world to accept that there is a vital distinction between calligraphy and typography has thus kept printing in Arabic at the same stage as printing in Europe after Gutenberg, but before the development by Garamond and others of characters designed specifically for type.

THE ARABIC BOOK *and the Arabic newspaper and periodical are thus literally 450 years behind the western book, and have failed so far to take advantage of the technological progress of printing which is at the heart of modern civilisation. Arab governments and Arab publishing firms are buying the most expensive and advanced equipment to produce a primitive and long outdated printed page which is actually inferior to what was being produced in the nineteenth century.*

The traditional Arabic alphabet consists of thirty-one cursive letters (in fact twenty-eight plus three grammatical forms), each of which, depending on the position of a letter in a given word as related to other cursive letters, has a number of formal variants, depending on whether it comes at the beginning, in the middle, or the end of a word, or is isolated. Hence handwritten Arabic, whether in the traditional naskhi, rukaah, *or other styles, is not adaptable to the requisite design limitations of modern printing, mechanical or electronic, nor to their highly simplified and restrictive keyboards.*

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world, whose Marxist-Leninist atheism it rejects—and is intended to help the Muslim peoples to new power.

The more traditionally-minded representatives of "Islamism" (e.g. Khomeini or the *ulemas* of Pakistan) place great value on the validity of the *Shari'a*, the canonical religious law of Islam. Left-wing or "emancipationist" Muslims, on the other hand (e.g. the Iranian Mujahedin-e chalq or the former president of Iran, Bani-Sadr), looked for a social revolution, clothing their demands in the religious forms and phraseology of the Koran and the principal theological texts. It was in Iran that the sociologist Ali Shariati (d. 1977), the theoretician of an "emancipationist" Islam and a disciple of Frantz Fanon, succeeded in harnessing the centuries-old archetypes of Shi'ite theology and *heilsgeschichte* (the teaching of the "Imams", the spiritual and political leaders of the Shi'ite community) in the service of his programme for social revolution. Under Khomeini, however, virtually nothing of Shariati's theories has survived.

ANOTHER CENTRE of the radical Muslim movement is Egypt where—in addition to the already 50-year-old organisation of the Muslim Brotherhood (*Ikhwan al Muslimun*)—recent years have seen the emergence of Islamic circles and groups whose religious zeal is if anything even greater than that of the Brotherhood. Although the members of these groups are without exception Sunnite Muslims, in Cairo they are openly referred to as "Khomeinists." The assassins of President Sadat came from among their ranks. Sadat had hoped to be able to contain "Islamism" in his country by laying special emphasis on Egypt's "Islamic character." But the reconciliation with the former "arch-enemy" Israel, though many Egyptians had wanted it, was an unforgivable offence in the eyes of the religious radicals (and they have already threatened to kill President Mubarak too if he continues the "betrayal" represented by Camp David).

From Cairo "Islamism" has spread to the Maghreb countries—Tunisia, Algeria, and Morocco. According to the reports of well-informed observers, the Algerian unity party FLN is now powerless to halt the advance of its radical-religious wing. One reason why "Islamism" is finding such a response in Algeria is that during the colonial period the French sought to eradicate everything Islamic and Arabic from the minds of the populace and bring the country more and more into line with "advanced" French culture. When it comes to making appointments, the emphasis is apparently on a particularly positive attitude towards Islam, a trend that had in fact already begun under President Boumedienne with his ascetic type of Islam. It is almost like a repetition of what happened 150 years ago, when Abd al-Qadir's warriors swept out of the desert to attack the French invader "in the name of Allah and his Prophet."

In Morocco, a country that is still largely characterised by long-standing Muslim traditions, King Hassan is similarly compelled to take account of growing religious opposition. For a long time Moroccans have been listening to the words of Sheikh Abdul Hamid Keshk, who lives in Cairo and whose sermons reach Egypt's neighbour countries on audio-cassettes. Sheikh Keshk,

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ALL THOSE WHO are involved in the printing of Arabic, whether typesetters or publishers, are aware of these drawbacks of the calligraphic style, and various attempts have been made, and are still being made, to overcome them. Before the arrival of electronic and computerised equipment, the most common attempt was to reduce the number of variants used by the typesetter, which ran into thousands, and to bring them down to hundreds; but this was not a real solution to the problem, only a palliative. With the arrival of the computer, the western manufacturers and designers of equipment have gone to the Arabic printing industries, and seduced them with the idea that the computer can store in its memory all the variants of the cursive letters, and produce the 'correct' shape by its own means. Unfortunately this idea appeals to the Arabic printer and to government authorities who believe that they have thus found the way to benefit from modern technology while 'preserving' their cultural heritage.

IN FACT, HOWEVER, *this use of the computer is not a step forward, but a step backwards for the Arabs, because it confirms them in their belief that the only true and 'authentic' style of Arabic writing is the calligraphic, and thus imprisons Arabic printing for ever within the limitations imposed by handwriting. In other words, the equipment now being made in the West and sold to the Arabs by all the major western and Japanese manufacturers of communications systems is not a typographical revolution, but a typographical regression, and a cultural disaster.*

IF ONE COULD imagine that all books and newspapers printed in English were printed in a cursive or italic style, one can understand the magnitude of the cultural and educational handicaps which are imposed on the Arabs by their own failure to grasp the real significance of modern technology in the field of printing and communications, and by western industry, which does not understand the problems of Arabic printing.

The only true typographical revolution for Arabic is that which recognises a distinction between the hand and the machine: which adds to Arabic writing a new dimension rather than trying to build on an old one; and which gives to Arabic printing all the advantages of economy, legibility, and creative evolution now enjoyed by the western world.

Cecil Hourani

in THE ARAB CULTURAL SCENE *(1982)*

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a blind man in middle age, is the best-known radical-religious preacher in Egypt. His appeals for a return to "true Islam" are being listened to with growing interest in the *bidonvilles*, the notorious corrugated-iron slums that have grown up around the cities of the Maghreb states.

But even in the outer reaches of the Islamic world, in the countries of the Sahel zone, in Black Africa, and in Indonesia (in population terms the largest of the Muslim states), Islam is steadily gaining ground. When in the middle of July Khomeini ordered his Iranian troops to take the Gulf War on to Iraqi soil, calling for "the liberation of Zionist-occupied Jerusalem", in many Islamic countries (including Indonesia) thousands and thousands of volunteers came forward. Evidently they were all prepared to suffer martyrdom in order to "liberate" Jerusalem from the yoke of the "infidel" because death in battle in God's own cause—as the Christian crusaders of the Middle Ages were also told—is a promise of heavenly bliss.

Culture-Clash

Jeddah

THE SAUDI JUDGE *presiding over the trial in Jeddah asked Richard Arnot, host of the illegal drinking party at which Helen Smith died, "Did you give your wife permission to talk to and dance with other men?"*

Arnot replied, "In our culture it isn't necessary to give permission to one's wife to drink and dance with other men."

The Judge refused to believe such an outlandish statement, and persisted, "But did you give her permission?" Arnot, giving up his attempt at cross-cultural explanation, resignedly replied, "Yes I did."

Recalling that scene later, Arnot told me that the Judge, thunderstruck at this shocking admission, "sat back in his chair and just looked totally astonished. In fact, it silenced him completely for a few minutes."

That scene, in the scruffy Jeddah courtroom three years ago when Arnot was tried for serving alcohol, is just one of many in this story in which the two cultures have come face-to-face with each other and retired in mutual bafflement and hostility.

One culture was represented by the urbane well-travelled, ambitious British surgeon. The other by an unsophisticated Saudi (who'd never been out of Jeddah) and who had to judge Arnot—to him a product of the 20th-century "decadent West"—according to the Shariya law, an ethical code originally devised by Mohammed to rule a society of desert tribes 1,300 years ago.

No wonder neither man could make head or tail of the other in this painful collision of cultures.

Ann Leslie
in the DAILY MAIL (*London*)

DOES THIS REVIVAL of militant Islam in fact mean a renaissance of the faith bequeathed by the prophet Mohammed? Or is it symptomatic of a decline which the radical line taken by the "Islamists" can only temporarily arrest? Is the "Islamic renaissance" a mighty breakthrough to a society morally stronger than that of the West, or is it simply a sign of a last-ditch stand against something inexorable, namely the total secularisation of the world springing from the West's "white man's" civilisation? Is the idea of an integral society, in which secular and spiritual are conceived and experienced as one, finally a thing of the past?

There can be, I confess, no easy answer to this. To start with, the current success of "Islamism" is undoubtedly a product of history. It is a commonplace of Islamic studies that Islam does not distinguish between the spiritual and the secular. This is generally expressed by saying that Islam is "*din wa daula*"—at once religion and state. Despite the fact that this expression does not occur in the Koran, it has become firmly established in the minds of most Muslims; their political thinkers, who have always been theologians as well, use it freely. The widening gulf between spiritual and secular things that characterises modern European history is unknown to Islamic civilisation. It appeared in only rudimentary fashion, for example, in the work of the medieval philosophers of Islam and that of its natural scientists, who encountered the "secular" in the shape of the writings of Aristotle. Aristotle was translated in Baghdad during the first period of the Abbasid khalifate (for the most part, by Christians who came from Syria and entered the service of the khalifs). Aristotle's philosophy not only influenced the thinking of such scholars as Avicenna, Averroes, and Avempace but also laid the foundations for the work of the Persian doctor Razi, for example, or that of the botanist and zoologist Ibn al Baitar.

All these fine intellects remained believing Muslims—though at daggers drawn with religious orthodoxy, i.e. with the powerful scribes (*ulema*) of Islam, who frowned on their "profane interests." In contrast to Christian Scholasticism, however, which was also influenced by Aristotle, Islamic "scholasticism" failed to take the secular impulse in its thinking any further. The upshot was that in Islam no distinction was drawn between spiritual and secular.

IN THE LIGHT OF THIS the few decades of colonialist "Westernisation" appear as no more than an

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interlude. Many Muslims experience the Western political ideas that have penetrated their countries during this century as alien—doubly so, in fact: firstly, as being imposed from outside; secondly, as being at variance with their culture and religion. There is also the fact that Western secular theories have not really (except perhaps in Lebanon and Turkey) produced much sound social progress. Today it looks as if both Nasser's "Islamic Socialism"—inconceivable without its Western influences—and the Arab socialism and nationalism of the Baath party have lost much of their appeal. Whereas Nasserism had thoroughly permeated the Arab masses, the ideology of the Baath party—significantly one of its founders was an Arab Christian—has basically remained confined to a small élite of civil servants and army officers. The Baath party's projected "resurgence" of the "Arab nation" from Morocco (i.e. the Atlantic) to the Pacific has not come to fruition. Consequently many Muslims, disappointed with the failure of the modern models that have been developed with such enthusiasm, are turning back to traditional ideas.

However, a far more important role in this process of the ideologisation of Islam is probably played by the cultural shock that has hit many Middle Eastern countries in recent decades. A poignant illustration of this is provided by the fall of the Shah, who in the space of a few years inundated his country with modern technology and Western consumerism—sometimes at its gaudiest. The mullahs in Iran were successful not least because they were able to show a people who were becoming increasingly insecure, having been jolted out of a life-style that had grown up over centuries, the advantages of a closed community clinging to age-old customs.

Egypt is another dispiriting example. Sadat's liberal economic policy brought to a country afflicted with enormous social tensions and virtually insuperable economic problems an inrush of modern consumer goods from the West—from cosmetics to videos—that was simply a bit too much for the Egyptian people. The same applies to the rich oil-states on the Gulf, whose peoples have in the space of a few years moved out of camel-hair tents and mud huts into comfortable modern flats—to say nothing of the rapid processes of urbanisation and industrialisation going on around them. I suspect that nowhere in the world are there so many emotionally disturbed people as on the Persian Gulf; and there would undoubtedly be even more of them if Islam of the traditional type were not there to cushion the blows.

The "Islamists", however, even attack the Islamic traditionalists, for example in Saudi Arabia, demanding that they turn their backs on Western civilisation. America, as the prime example of technical progress and the pluralist (even permissive) life-style, is for them the symbol of all evil. Not even political dealings are admissible with such a power.

THE MAIN CRITICISM that the "Islamists" level against the West is that its culture is "decadent." The West may have achieved great things in terms of science and technology; but the price of this progress on a material level has been a loss of transcendence, of religious substance. In Western civilisation, they say, despite a high standard of living, nihilism and moral emptiness are widely prevalent.

This criticism of Western civilisation cannot, in my view, be rejected as entirely false. Many Western critics of the Islamic world all too easily forget that since Nietzsche—and up to and including Erich Fromm and Daniel Bell—the West has been finding many aspects of its own model increasingly questionable. But the "Islamists", too, can be accused of not attempting to understand Western civilisation but instead condemning *en bloc*. Hitherto the Easterners have made no attempt to come to terms, for example, with the evolution and essence of democracy. Instead it has taken the peripheral manifestations (and sometimes even perversions) that have reached them, and therewith produced a caricature of the West which they then contrast with their Islamic ideal. It is significant, incidentally, that the Islamic world has never produced anything worth mentioning in the way of historical analysis and criticism of the Koran (it would be regarded as blasphemy); this has been left entirely to Western orientalist scholars.

Their first research efforts may well, in decades gone, have been influenced by Western colonial interests—a fact that the representatives of "Islamism" quote in support of their theory that the West is not unbiased in its attitude towards Islam. This may in some instances be the case; yet it represents only part of the truth. The West has nothing to fear from a self-assured Islamic world, but it does have something to fear from an Islamic world that, because of its—to some extent justified—fear of the negative manifestations of industrial civilisation, seeks refuge in the name of piety in a totalitarian society and even tries to export this "ideal." The trouble with Ayatollah Khomeini is not that he is a devout man but that he is trying to spread his totalist interpretation of religion (which even the orthodox Wahhabis of Saudi Arabia find alarming) through the use of force.

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LETTERS

Aggressors & Peace-Lovers

I REALISED that my article in ENCOUNTER March 1982 (adapted from the Creighton Lecture I gave in the University of London last November) could not "be detached from current controversy"; but it was not intended as polemic, and it would hardly have been scholarly to suppress those parts of my analysis that gave comfort to those with whom Max Beloff and I politically disagree. Unfortunately, it is very often the case that the "threat to world peace" comes from those who feel themselves threatened. That was the point of my quotation from Thucydides. As Clausewitz said, War takes place mainly for the sake of the defender.

> "The aggressor is always peace-loving: he would like to make his entry into our country undisturbed. . . ."

If that quotation is of value to the CND and the World Peace Movement, they are very welcome to it.

Incidentally, I don't know what Lord Beloff was taught at school about the long-bow and the cross-bow; but I hope he was not brought up to see them as having been weapons of decisive *strategic* importance. They were not. Early siege-artillery trains perhaps were. The Princes who could afford them certainly became, briefly, Super-Powers.

MICHAEL HOWARD

Oxford

Tanzania-on-the-Sea

HAVING seen ENCOUNTER on the book stands here, but never bought it before, I did finally lay out $3.25 for the June–July edition.

I thoroughly enjoyed James Neilson's article on Borges; and following on the Falkland trail, was towards the end of Edward Pearce's "London Commentary" when I was brought up short by a glaring error. Julius Nyerere is certainly black, he may indeed be good, but *"landlocked"*? Not unless he has switched territory with Kenneth Kaunda in Zambia, which was, I imagine, the country Mr Pearce had in mind.

STEVE WADHAMS

Toronto

Deterrence & Disarmament

THE DIFFERENCE between the debate used by Disarmers and supporters of Deterrence usually goes unmentioned. The former discusses the prevention of nuclear war in terms of the cause that is most salient and associated in our minds with it: weapons that are closely connected with the effects of their use. Whereas the latter discusses the prevention of nuclear war in terms of what is most practicable to control antecedent to its occurrence: namely, the belief that its initiation can achieve military advantage.

The relative failure of those opposed to the Disarmament movement is in part due to the lack of a persuasive argument as to why removing the most obvious preliminary for there to be a nuclear war (that of nuclear weapons) shouldn't undo the possibility of war itself. And why so much concern should be placed on something so changeable as the belief of military planners in the practicability (or otherwise) of the nuclear option available to them.

Though I am convinced that Deterrence is more sound than Disarmament as a means by which peace can be maintained, I am disturbed by watching on TV the effects of nuclear weapons on people as portrayed in the *War Game* and *Q.E.D.: A Guide to Armageddon*. Yet this revulsion, which I imagine I share with most if not all people, cannot be grounds for rejecting nuclear weapons. For nuclear weapons can only be rejected if in doing so the possibility of a horrific war is reduced. And however revolting the effects of nuclear weapons may be they do when held bilaterally as they are presently prevent either side having the confidence—or misconception—to use them.

The paradigms concerning peace and how it is preserved differ in their perception of priorities. Disarmament is a mistaken concern for the cause which is most strongly felt to be associated with the evil of nuclear war, and is taken to be the most relevant as a means to prevent it. Deterrence is concerned with removing causes, and it is in the real military world being practicably achieved.

J. R. SKOYLES

Hampstead
London

"Brideshead Resisted"

EDWARD PEARCE ["Brideshead Resisted", ENCOUNTER, March] will be distressed to learn that America did indeed salute *Brideshead*. The reviews were excellent, and my wife's chiropodist who seems a decent enough chap thought it was positively marvellous. Unlike Mr Pearce, he did not even distinguish between "great actors like Olivier and famous ones like Gielgud." He thought they were both great and famous.

It was obviously all too real for Mr Pearce. The rest of us thought that what we were seeing was a lovingly dramatised novel with some beautiful backgrounds (much appreciated here during the snowstorms), some fine players at play and a remembrance of (some) things past. It must have been awfully good to have enraged Mr Pearce as much as it did.

If he lived in this country and endured American television he would be thankful for such large mercies. We were frightfully sorry when it eventually came to an end.

WALTER HAYES

Ann Arbor
Michigan

Shame & Glory of Print

HAS IT NOT occurred to Eric Sevareid ["Journalism", Letters, January, p. 94] that readers of "one of the most thoughtful periodicals in the English-reading world" are the very readers likely to wonder why a man who believes himself to have been "outrageously misrepre-

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sented" is so extremely shy about giving the slightest indication of wherein he has been misrepresented?

Dickens once spoke of "the glory of print." Mr Sevareid is apparently suffering from the shame of print. He is embarrassed by the look of his spoken words in print, yet he cannot unsay them and therefore vents his frustration at the person who has reported them. When shame is a sign of remorse and the desire for self-correction, it is to be welcomed; but in Eric Sevareid it is only an occasion for the release of a small and untidy passion.

EDWARD ALEXANDER

University of Washington
Seattle, USA

"Ms", and Other Hits & Misses

RUPERT WILKINSON ("A Brief Guide to Semantic Obsession", ENCOUNTER, May) states dismissively that it is "inviting ridicule" to use the designation "*Ms.*" Perhaps. But so too in the early '60s did it seem absurd to speak of "Blacks" rather than of Negroes. Yet twenty years later we, Wilkinson included, do it easily and unselfconsciously. What once was contrived is now a commonplace.

Of course, it might be argued that *Ms* is offensive while *Black* is not because *Ms*, alone of the two, is a neologism; but that is a distinction without a difference. What troubles Wilkinson is what troubles all well-intentioned conservatives—the jarring effect of radical change. If only change would be gradual and not disruptive of the existing order, if only, as in this case, language would reflect change rather than generate it, change would be acceptable. But that is not what the Woman's Movement, the Civil Rights Movement, or any other movement for change is, or can be, about. The way we speak (as Rupert Wilkinson certainly knows) informs the way we think, and it is the thinking about men and women which feminists rightly believe is in need of challenge, disruption, and ultimately of fundamental alteration.

Wilkinson protests against *Ms* on another ground: he thinks it unecessary. His wife, he insists, "would sooner settle for plain 'Mary Wilkinson'", but that I suspect is only as a form of reference and not as a form of address. What I question specifically is whether a letter that began "Dear Mary Wilkinson" would meet his linguistic approval. It does not, after all, conform to Wilkinson's standard of an "established designation", and the fact that it is no designation at all may smack of an awkwardness more jarring than its all-purpose alternative—*Ms* Wilkinson.

There is, therefore, a need for prefixes in forms of

The Curse of the Paraphrase

New York City

IF WE ACCEPT *the principle that an informed citizenry is essential to our society, then it seems to me a function of the press is to inform citizens as best it can. Whether all the citizens want to be informed is beside the point. The information should be there for those who wish to profit from it. Moreover, it seems to me also that this is but one example of the decline in the performance of that role by the press.*

For another, there's a growing attitude among reporters that if they are writing about a speech, or about some other important public matter such as a Supreme Court decision, they haven't done their job if they simply quote from the speech or document. The new habit is to paraphrase, with perhaps a quoted phrase or two scattered through the story. What the reader gets, then, is at best a filtered view of what the man said, what the court decided or what this-or-that public body actually proposed.

THUS AFTER I HAD READ *several of those long stories about President Reagan's speech (including the one in the* New York Times*) I had only the reporter's interpretation of the words spoken. I found not so much as a single paragraph of connected sentences quoted directly from the President.*

If this new journalistic habit of paraphrasing everything is bad enough for a major presidential speech, it's even more troublesome in other areas. The reporter the next morning will also tell you just about everything except what the candidate actually said about Taxes, the Budget, Poland, the Middle East, or whatever. Unless, that is, he goofed, confusing the name of the head of Iraq with the head of Syria.

YOU CAN'T HELP *wondering how it would have been in the past with the reporting habits of the modern media. We'd have read that Roosevelt urged people not to be afraid, that Churchill told the British he had nothing to offer but more hardships. It would be easy to dismiss the words that enclosed those thoughts as tired cliches or political rhetoric.*

Yet the truth is we live by words, especially the words of those who would lead us. Very often the words they choose tell us more about how they would lead us than the actions they propose. So it seems to me the least our newspapers should do is give us a chance to read, to pause, to weight the words they speak to us.

Vermont Royster
in the WALL STREET JOURNAL

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address. This is especially true in British society where the taste is strong for initials in place of given names, thereby confounding any possibility of gender identification. How is one to address lesser known counterparts of P. D. James and A. J. P. Taylor, or, for that matter, Evelyn Waugh? It would be useful to know, especially for those of us whose support of feminism is a commitment to sexual equality rather than to unisexual disguise, and who don't believe that all male-female distinctions need to be obscured. As Eleanor Smeal of the National Organization of Women said only recently of the defeat of the proposed Equal Rights Amendment to the US Constitution, it was the distaste for basic equality—and not the fear of unisex lavatories—that made the difference.

The point, then, is that if we are going to distinguish, in reference and address, between those women who are married and those who are not, we ought to have a corresponding distinction for men. Short of that, so long as *Mr* is used for all males, there is need of an equivalent for females. And, in service of that need, *Ms* seems to do quite well. Rather than "jerry-made", as Wilkinson would have it, it would appear instead to be purpose-built.

HOWARD NENNER

Northampton
Mass., USA

THE MOST important issue raised by Howard Nenner is whether élite-led changes in language can shift attitudes and behaviour. In general I don't believe they can. The movement to reclassify armpit-smell as "body odour" did not cause greater tolerance of smelly people; having "B.O." merely became a synonym for being smelly. I do believe, however, that deliberate changes in language can winkle out our inconsistencies and increase our awareness of bias when principles of belief have already shifted. Therefore, efforts to change the language of gender can make us aware of continuing male discrimination where feminist principles are basically accepted.

I would also concede the reality of what Nenner says about prefixes and confess that I have no satisfactory alternative to the miserable-sounding "*Ms*." But the point about ridicule remains. "*Black*", as a substitute for "Negro", was not a contrived word in the '60s and it did not look funny. In some cases, contrivedness, with its vulnerability to ridicule, may be worth it, a necessary price of change. But not always. Nenner says he is for gender equality rather than unisex. Currently he is (*is*, not *has*) the "chair" of a history department. Let him return to being a "chairman" and permit women department heads to be "chairwomen." He may adduce other arguments against this but the question should be relative and pragmatic, one of tactics rather than absolute demands and linguistic censorship.

A unifying theme of my article is that consciousness about language becomes acute at a crossing point when the linguistically unfamiliar becomes familiar, or vice versa—when the familiar is seen in a new light. Feminism here has probably contributed more to the study of language than language has to feminism; its contributions go beyond arguments about form of address.

RUPERT WILKINSON

University of Sussex
Falmer, Brighton

"Brandt"

IT IS REGRETTABLE that space considerations prevented Professor Peter Wiles—"The 'Jihad' against Brandt" [ENCOUNTER, March 1982] from giving examples of the "great successes of collectivism." I for one have been baffled for many years by the allegations by academics, the international agencies, media-men and many others of the economic achievements of Communist régimes. For decades we have been hearing about phenomenal growth rates in these economies; and yet their citizens have continued to do without simple necessities.

The developments in Poland (our most recent large-scale Aid-recipient) and elsewhere in Eastern Europe appear specifically to contradict Professor Wiles. Surely he could not have alluded to the admitted success of the German "Democratic" Republic in "solving" its emigration problem or to the continuing success of the Soviet Union in preventing people from leaving. These successes do present a contrast with conditions in Singapore and Taiwan, but hardly in the sense of Professor Wiles's comment on these latter countries.

It is surely time to lay to rest this humbug of the great success of Collectivism *vs.* the Market economy.

GEORGE SZASZ

Zurich

Max Hastings' "Bombers"

ALTHOUGH HIS COMMENT "The Controversy over Bombers and Bombing" (ENCOUNTER, August 1982) is adroitly written, Max Hastings protests too much about the emotional reception accorded his book *Bomber Command* by reviewers. He, however, should not be surprised since the majority of those who addressed themselves to his work, particularly senior R.A.F. officers, are not historians. That the book was overlooked by academic journals is, perhaps, unfortunate; but it suggests that "professional" historians still consider other fields more promising, or that Mr Hastings' book, with its lack of references and its overwhelming dependence upon British sources, did not merit serious consideration. These, however, are speculations.

As one who experienced the fear, exhilaration, bitterness and sadness that epitomised Bomber Command operations, I am puzzled that our efforts (contribution to the War Effort, if you will) continue to be so superficially assessed. It is true that to date the *Ultra* revelations about "bombing effectiveness" during the War or the *Luftwaffe*'s order-of-battle over Germany have been very limited. But with new documentary sources coming into the public sector it seems clear that just as the history of World War II will have to be reappraised, so Bomber Command's contribution to victory must be put into accurate historical context.

Some indication of the nature and extent of that contribution has been reflected in recent years from German quarters. In an extract from an interview carried out by Roger Clark (published in *The Listener*, 10 September 1981), Albert Speer touched upon the impact of the night bombing campaign against Germany.

> "This [the enormous losses in production] was concealed because we were always producing more and more. After the War the Allies said they didn't succeed with their bombing attacks because otherwise German

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production would have gone lower. But I can prove we had our programmes and we were always 20 to 30% behind our targets. I calculated how many tanks, guns and ammunition were lost—and it's enormous. It was the greatest lost battle—several times Stalingrad. We also had a whole army with very effective guns—thousands of them—with stocks of ammunition all over Germany to beat off the attacks. This was the biggest waste. What the Russians asked for, the Second Front, was already in action in '43 and '44. The front was in the air. We missed those thousands of 88-centimetre anti-aircraft guns very much, in the fight against the Russian tanks, because they were very accurate and would have given the Russian armies their greatest losses. In my opinion, the *Royal Air Force with its night attacks was very effective—much more effective than historians want it now to have been* [italics added]."

When the evidence now coming forward is assessed, I would venture to suggest that those who served (and the 56,000 who died) in Bomber Command operations will be found, unlike Leonidas's three hundred Spartans at Thermopylae, to have made a not insubstantial contribution to Allied victory.

WILLIAM RODNEY

Royal Roads Military College
Victoria, B.C.
Canada

Yes/No Trap

WOULD the following be worthy of a paragraph in "Life & Letters Today"? Perhaps it could be headed "Chat Show."

> "We were in a one-to-one conversational situation . . . [I fell into the yes/no trap i.e. she was reduced to yes-and-no-replies-only to the questions]."

The above remarks were made by a married woman student of the Open University's course on "Cognitive Development" (broadcast on Radio Three, VHF at 6.35 a.m. on Friday 5 March 1982). N.B.: I am not a student myself; the programme merely preceded the weather forecast.

Needless to say, she passed her examinations.

K. A. SILCOCKS

Cottingham
East Yorkshire

Steiner's "Hitler"

IN HIS ARTICLE on George Steiner's morally obnoxious, intellectually spurious and aesthetically poor Hitler novella (ENCOUNTER, May), Hyam Maccoby refers to Steiner as "the accomplished linguist, the scholarly semanticist, the connoisseur of literary styles."

The first of these Steiner may well be, but certainly neither the second nor the third. A semanticist and a stylist would, surely, be aware of the difference in meaning between "infer" and "imply." "I am not, God knows, inferring any comparison between such precedents and my small novel": quote from Steiner.

CHARLES OSBORNE

London

Lear: Mad & Incognito

YOUR RHETORICAL questions are just a shade too wry, M. J. L. in his introductory box to Adam Wazyk's "Story of a Poem" (ENCOUNTER, March 1982 p. 77) asks:

> "Have the clocks in Poland now been turned back to where they once were? Is the Orwellian censor who was being poked fun at and who was squirming under Solidarity's embarrassing questions ("Interview with a Censor: the Polish Art of Blue-Pencilling", ENCOUNTER, November 1981) again at his old job of totalitarian thought-control? . . ."

Of course he is, the cynical clever fellow. But the real question is whether those millions of *Solidarity* readers are not, even in their chastened desperation, proceeding to take up—in the spirit of Adam Wazyk—the old duel of wits?

Your readers may not have had their attention called to the affair of an innocuous music review published recently in the Gdansk newspaper, *Dziennik Baltycki*, which evidently sold out the issue, some copies going at black-market prices. It has by now been generally accepted as "a minor classic" in the annals of "slipping one by the censor." You will be delighted to know that your "K-62" probably came to the conclusion that Who-cares-about-musicology-anyway, and let it all get printed without benefit of blue-pencilling.

The article was ostensibly a review of a new American record album, but it was built around *The Crow*, which is the underground slogan against General Jaruzelski's martial law authority. Thus, the first letters in the consecutive paragraphs of the Gdansk article spell out WRONA SKONA or *The Crow Will Die*.

PROTEST AND PERISH

A Critique of Unilateralism

By Philip Towle, Iain Elliot and Gerald Frost

"Some would say that the answer is simple – to refuse to fight, to become a pacifist. But the 20th Century has not been kind to pacifist beliefs. We live in an age of cold-blooded racial and ideological murder on a scale undreamt of for centuries. . . There is no reason therefore to believe that the pacifist will necessarily be saving life by refusing to defend that oasis of human dignity represented by the democratic West."

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One can only wonder how K-62 and his other sharp-eyed colleagues in Poland's restored censorship apparatus missed the whole pattern. After all, the statistical probability that the first letters in 10 successive paragraphs should "coincidentally" spell out an opposition slogan is very slight indeed. Moreover, the complete article—on the face of it an evaluation of the American vocalist, Amanda Lear, and her album called *Incognito*—is an elaborate political metaphor. It is not disco music that is being criticised, but the régime.

Fun and games? No, the regrouping of the forces for liberty in Poland goes on, even if in dark corners and crevices. And if the watchful censor concentrates too single-mindedly on every new article, word for word, paragraph by paragraph, he will just miss what is being said between the lines.

After all, it is not for nothing that the celebrated founder of General Semantics—Count Alfred Korzybski—was born in Warsaw. He is still a Polish guide to the secret meanings of language.

TADEUSZ SCHIMANSKI

West Berlin

AUTHORS

John McGahern's novel *The Pornographer*, published by Faber in 1979, has been brought out in a paperback edition by Quartet Books together with a volume of his short stories, *Getting Through*.

Daniel Bell is Professor of Sociology at Harvard University. Among his books are *The End of Ideology* (1965), *The Reforming of General Education* (1966), *The Coming of Post-Industrial Society* (1974), *The Cultural Contradictions of Capitalism* (1976), and a collection of essays.

George Urban graduated from Budapest University in 1947 and obtained his Ph.D. at the University of London in 1956. He served with the BBC from 1948–60 and from 1960–65 was director of university broadcasting for Radio Free Europe. He is now academic consultant to RFE, and recorded his conversation with Daniel Bell on their behalf. Among numerous publications, he has edited *Détente* (1976), *Hazards of Learning* (1977), *Eurocommunism* (1978), *Communist Reformation* (1979), and *Stalinism: Its Impact on Russia and the World* (1982), all published by Maurice Temple Smith. Many of the extended conversations which appear in his books had their first publication in ENCOUNTER.

Mary Midgley, formerly Senior Lecturer in Philosophy at the University of Newcastle upon Tyne, is the author of *Beast and Man* and *Heart and Mind: The Varieties of Moral Experience* (Harvester, 1979, 1981). "Duties Concerning Islands" is included in the forthcoming *Essays in Environmental Philosophy*, edited by Robert Elliot and A. Gare. Weidenfeld publish this year her book on *Women's Choices*, and Penguin her discussion of *Animals and Why They Matter*.

Roy Fuller's *Vamp Till Ready*, his second volume of memoirs, was published in 1982 by London Magazine Editions. His latest volume of poetry, *The Individual and His Times* (Athlone Press, 1982), is a selection from his works.

Douglas Dunn's most recent volume of poems is *St Kilda's Parliament* (Faber, 1981). His anthology of new poets from Hull, *A Rumoured City*, was brought out last year by Bloodaxe Books, who also published his new long poem, *Europa's Lover*.

Pete Morgan's volume of poems, *The Spring Collection*, was published by Secker & Warburg in 1979.

David Pryce-Jones is the author of a biography of Unity Mitford (n.e. Star Books, 1981). His historical study of *Paris in the Third Reich* was published in 1981 by Collins, who this spring bring out his biography of Cyril Connolly.

Edward Pearce is a leader writer and Parliamentary sketch writer on the *Daily Telegraph* in London.

Dannie Abse's novel *Ash on a Young Man's Sleeve* was brought out in a new edition by Penguin in 1982. "A Meeting with Robert Graves" forms part of his volume of memoirs, *A Strong Dose of Myself*, to be published early this spring by Hutchinson (who in 1981 brought out his most recent volume of poems, *Way Out in the Centre*).

Malcolm Bradbury is Professor of American Studies at the University of East Anglia. His novels include *Eating People is Wrong* (1959), *Stepping Westward* (1965), and *The History Man* (1975); his latest, *Rates of Exchange*, will be published by Secker & Warburg in April. Among his works of literary criticism are *The Social Context of Modern English Literature* (Blackwell, 1971) and *Possibilities: Essays on the State of the Novel* (Oxford University Press, 1973). "Struggling Westward" (of which the first part appeared in the January issue of ENCOUNTER) is developed from a lecture given in Venice to a meeting of the Italian Association for American Studies. Some of these comments are extended in his forthcoming study, *The Modern American Novel* (Oxford University Press, 1983).

Mary Ellmann is the author of *Thinking about Women* (Harcourt Brace, 1968; n.e. Virago 1979).

A. N. Wilson, Literary Editor of *The Spectator*, whose most recent novels are *The Healing Art*, *Who Was Oswald Fish?*, and *Wise Virgin* (Secker & Warburg, 1980–82), has followed his prize-winning study of Sir Walter Scott (1980) with a biography of John Milton, published this month by Oxford University Press.

W. G. Lerch is a journalist specialising in Middle Eastern affairs. He writes regularly on this subject for the *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*.

ED. NOTE: The article by Conor Cruise O'Brien in our January issue was originally commissioned by *The New Republic* and we are grateful to the editors for their permission to publish it in ENCOUNTER.

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New York City

ECCENTRIC: **The picture that comes down of Helena Rubinstein in these years is of a small, dynamic woman, given to extravagant modes of expression. She never spoke any language properly, had never lost her Polish accent, and her speech was peppered with eccentric phrases. Jewish people were "*nebbishy-looking*"; anything she did not like was "*dreck*"; she would be there "*in a jiffy*"; and when she was angry—as she often was—things "*got on her pip.*"**

THE TIMES

London

THE SOUND OF EVIDENCE: *The moral climate of Thornton Heath, an otherwise unremarkable South London suburb, was tested last week in the hushed and attentive atmosphere of the Old Bailey's Court No 8. Under particular examination was a single slogan: do some local residents shout* **"Sieg Heil"***? Or do they shout* **"Seagulls"***?*

The distinction is crucial. It delineates the racially sensitive background against which the trial for the murder of Terry May is being played out. May, a 19-year-old crippled white youth, was stabbed three times last June when what the prosecution describes as "a terrifying mob of young blacks" attacked the motorcycle on which he was a pillion passenger. May struggled to a nearby house and died on the doorstep.

A defence counsel, maintains it is **"Sieg Heil"***—"a fascist, racist type of chant that denotes racial hostility to Blacks and Jews". Terence Lawrence, the licensee of the Wilton Arms, a local public house which was smashed up in "an orgy of violence" is sure it is* **"Seagulls"***—a taunting cry of Crystal Palace football supporters out to get their rivals, Brighton & Hove Albion. Brighton's nickname, he explains, is "the Seagulls".*

SUNDAY TIMES

London

MISAPPLICATION: *I noticed some 'misapplied terms' on television the night before [Michael Davie writes].*

Mr Francis Pym, the new Foreign Secretary, said: "I will discharge it (his new job) to the best of my responsibility." Mrs Thatcher had announced that it was her aim "to redeem the Falkland Islands." Her interviewer had said: "You've staked your colours to the mast."

The confused vocabulary reflected a general sense of confusion over the crisis. Possibly Mrs Thatcher, in committing herself and the nation to "redeem" the Falkland Islands, as a variant on her commitment to "recover" them, had been using the word in the sense of redeeming an object in pawn. Mr Pym had simply used the wrong word: "responsibility" instead of "ability." And the interviewer had confused two idioms: "stake your reputation" and "nail your colours to the mast."

THE OBSERVER

Toronto

MONEY TALKS: **The International Monetary Fund press conferences here can present special difficulties for assembled hacks. I attended one where a gentleman from Trinidad and Tobago was trying to field some questions about Third World aid from an Indian journalist with a Swedish PR man from the World Bank trying to help out.**

The automatic translation devices were useless because all three of them thought they were speaking English. Nobody could understand the questions and nobody could understand the answers, either. A difficult moment.

THE STANDARD

New York City

DOUBLE-SPEAK: *Blundering, foot-in-the-mouth officials emerge as winners of the "Doublespeak Award." The award comes from a committee of the National Council of Teachers of English, who work for the use of clear and precise English.*

The Doublespeak Award made news when the annual tribute went to an Air Force press officer in Cambodia, who attacked reporters after an American raid, saying: **"You always write it's bombing, bombing, bombing. It's not bombing. It's air support."**

The 1979 award went to the nuclear power industry for the invention of a whole lexicon of jargon and euphemisms which included **"energetic disassembly"** *for explosion, and* **"rapid oxidation"** *for fire.*

The teachers now have a Doublespeak quarterly review which is used to make a sort of linguistic truth squad, searching the airwaves and newspapers for the classics in verbal nonsense.

Highlighted in a recent publication were **"pre-owned"** *for used,* **"eliminating redundancies in the human resources area"** *for firing, and* **"human kinetics"** *for school athletics.*

The patron saint is, of course, George Orwell, who predicted that governments would have "Ministries of Truth."

DAILY MAIL

Strasbourg

COMPUTERISED BABEL: **The European Economic Community, struggling with seven working languages and huge translation costs, is considering a computer translation system for its paperwork.**

A $13-million system, called the Eurotra project, has been proposed by the European Commission in Brussels and was given broad backing in the European Parliament.

Researchers told the assembly that human translators cost about 14 U.S. cents a word. One existing computer system can do the work for 10 cents a word, and the proposed Eurotra computer would reduce that to 6 cents a word.

About one-fourth of the EEC staff is employed translating documents and reports.

INTERNATIONAL HERALD TRIBUNE

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